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THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON I

LANFREY

THE HISTORY

OF

NAPOLEON THE FIRST

BY

P. LANFREY

IN FOUR VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

1800–1804

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This Translation has been made with the sanction of the Author.

THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON

CHAPTER I

GENOA, ULM, MARENGO

All the overtures of the First Consul on the subject of peace had been successively rejected. His persistency had been met with coldness and disdain. But his end was attained. The merits of moderation were shown to be on his side; in the eyes of the nation he appeared to be invested with the new prestige of a patient and pacific policy; he stood forth as the champion of disinterestedness and humanity. He threw upon the allied powers the responsibility of a war which none more ardently desired than himself. Their obstinacy filled him with secret joy, for he stood in need of a great military success;[1] and henceforward all his plans were laid for a stupendous and overwhelming campaign.

The coalition, weakened by the defection, already virtual though not yet declared, of the Emperor Paul, who could not forgive Austria the humiliation of Zurich, concentrated its forces on two main points. The plan of attacking us in Switzerland was abandoned, because of the disastrous results which had followed similar attempts in the previous campaign; and we were thus left in undisputed possession

[1] *Mémoires de Napoleon.* Note on the *Précis des Evénements Militaires*, by Mathieu Dumas.

of that advanced position, so valuable to us as a basis of offensive operations both in Italy and Germany. The scheme adopted was to render this position useless, by means of two great armies, assembled, the one in Swabia, to guard the Rhine and command all the passes of the Black Forest from Strasburg to Schaffhausen; the other in Piedmont, to menace all the posts occupied by us along the shore between Genoa and Nice, and ready at any time to throw itself into Provence. The army of Swabia, after deducting all the garrisons of the forts, numbered 120,000 trained soldiers. It was commanded by Marshal Kray, a skilful and experienced officer, the successor of the Archduke Charles, who had been for a time disgusted with the career of arms by the vexatious posture of the Aulic Council. This army, massed together in the neighbourhood of Donaueschingen, that is, about the centre of the broad angle which the Rhine forms between Strasburg and the Lake of Constance, commanded all the outlets of that mountainous region. It could, by extending its wings from Mayence to the Tyrol, bear with equal readiness on the Swiss or the Alsatian frontier, as the point of attack might require; while in encountering any enemy who should attempt to cross the Rhine, it had all the advantage of the most rapid facilities of concentration. Occupying the centre of a sort of vast entrenched camp, enclosed by a river broad and deep, by thick forests and a double line of mountains, Kray's army was designed, at any rate to begin with, to remain on the defensive, and simply to bar our entrance into Germany.

The honour of striking the first and most telling blows was reserved for the army of Italy, and its general M. de Mélas. Three considerations led the allies to direct their principal attack upon the Apennines:—the known feebleness of the army of Masséna; the hope, ever dear to the English, of retaking and destroying Toulon; and the yet more chimerical hope of rousing our southern populations to rebellion. To gain possession of Genoa and Toulon; then, after taking up a body of 20,000 men, which England was gathering in Minorca, to enter Provence;

and finally, to march upon our central provinces, while Kray, abandoning his defensive attitude, should make a diversion by crossing the Rhine,—such was the part assigned to the Baron de Mélas and the 117,000 men under his command. To oppose these forces, France had only three armies, the inferiority of which consisted specially in this—that one of them, the army of reserve, existed as yet only on paper, and could not possibly come into action until much later in the campaign. The army of the Rhine, under Moreau, numbered, after deducting the garrisons, about 110,000 men. Its operations were to be directed against Kray. The army of Italy, which, under the command of Masséna, was to oppose the forces of Mélas, amounted to barely 25,000 men;[1] and with these all the passes of the Apennines and the Alps were to be guarded against Austrian invasion. Both armies, however, were composed of veteran troops, and they had at their head two eminent generals, the one unique for fire and impetuosity in the moment of action, the other no less illustrious for the wisdom and prudence of his combinations. As to the army of reserve, no one in Europe, and scarcely any one even in France, believed in it at all. It was composed of troops drawn from La Vendée, from Holland, and from the interior, augmented by new levies of the conscription, and by some detachments of volunteers. It was nominally assembled at Dijon, where a few straggling battalions of conscripts might be seen; but in reality it was dispersed over the country, from Châlons-sur-Marne to Lyon, ready however to combine at the first signal given. Thanks to the ostentatious parade with which its formation was announced, and the skilful precautions taken to conceal its real existence, it had come to be universally regarded as a mere fiction. A jest and a by-word to stranger and enemy, this invisible army of reserve still went on growing in silence, adding to itself troop after troop, and prepared by its position either to reinforce the army of the Rhine or

[1] This is the number given by General Thiébaut, in his excellent reply to Napoleon's attacks on Masséna, published in the *Journal Historique du Siége des Gènes.*

to help the feeble forces of Masséna, or to act separately, should such a course appear more opportune.

What was to be the direction given to these three corps? Our course seemed decided for us by the plan of campaign marked out by the allies, and still more by the necessities of the case. Of the two frontiers threatened, that of the Rhine was beyond comparison the more important, both for Austria and France. To both these powers, a battle lost or gained on the Rhine, or in the valley of the Danube, would involve consequences immeasurably graver than those entailed by victory or defeat on the Gulf of Genoa or in Italy. In the latter case the blow would be struck at the extremities, while in the former it would fall upon the heart, since the battle-field was situated on the direct line from Vienna to Paris. Brilliant as had been the numerous victories achieved by Bonaparte in Italy in 1796, they had effected nothing conclusive, just because they had been gained in Italy. On the other hand, his very first victorious battle-field in Germany had made him master of the Empire.

It was therefore a capital error on the part of the allies to direct their main attack upon a point not only secondary in importance from its remote situation, but also easy of defence from its natural surrounding and fortified works. In fact, the Apennines, Genoa, the line of the Var, and Toulon, were so many barriers, which, defended by such a general as Masséna, were sufficient to arrest their progress for long months, in spite of the overwhelming superiority of their forces. The hazardous position taken up by Mélas at so great a distance from the hereditary provinces, his natural base, had also this further drawback, that if Kray should sustain a defeat in the valley of the Danube, the army of Italy could never arrive in time to cover Vienna against the army of Moreau.

Hence it was obvious that our concentrated strength must be brought to bear upon Kray, while Masséna should receive only such reinforcements as were strictly necessary to enable him to maintain the defensive. Let Kray's army only be destroyed, and it would be in our power either to

dictate the terms of peace at Vienna, or to take the army of Mélas in the rear, and cut off his retreat. This is what Napoleon himself expressly recognises when he affirms that 'the commanding frontier is that of the Rhine;'[1] and again, when he states that, in consequence of his dissent from Moreau on the question of the opening of the campaign, he was for a moment tempted to place himself at the head of that army, '*calculating that he should be under the walls of Vienna sooner than Mélas would be before Nice.*'[2] Such being the state of the case, as indicated by all the military bearings of the situation, it followed that the more powerful blows must be struck in Germany, since only there could they insure instantly decisive results.

This was the opinion of Moreau. He held that in Germany the fate of the war must be decided; and it was there that he desired to concentrate our whole forces. Before he was aware of the precise destination of the army of reserve, he urged again and again that it should be sent into Switzerland to support and follow the army of the Rhine.[3] But Bonaparte would not consent to the union of these two armies, unless he could himself take the command of them. The decisive blows destined to terminate the war he would strike himself. To have them struck now in Germany would be to surrender the honour to Moreau. For, in the first place, Moreau had openly refused to serve under his orders;[4] and, in the second, the internal condition of the Republic would not allow Bonaparte at present to leave Paris in order to take the command. The part he designed for Moreau in his plan of the campaign was therefore only a sort of prologue, intended to prepare for his own appearance on the scene. Instead of making the operations in Germany the principal object of the campaign, he made them entirely subordinate to the plan which he proposed himself to execute in Italy, at the head of the

[1] *Mémoires;* note on the *Précis* of Mathieu Dumas.
[2] *Mémoires.* Ulm-Moreau.
[3] *Lettres de Moreau au Premier Consul, 8 Avril; à Berthier, 24 Avril. Mémorial du dépôt de la Guerre,* vol. v.
[4] *Mémoires Militaires du Maréchal Gouvion Saint-Cyr.*

army of reserve. According to this famous, and in some respects justly famous, plan, Moreau having assembled his forces in great strength between Strasburg and Basle, and still more between Basle and Constance, was to mislead the enemy by feigned demonstrations, and then to cross the Rhine at three points between Schaffhausen and Constance, that is to say, at the extreme left of Kray's army. The Black Forest would thus be turned, and the enemy would be then thrown back into Bavaria.

Napoleon subsequently wrote, and the statement has been perpetually repeated, that by this opening of the campaign he offered Moreau an easy method of cutting off and destroying Kray's 120,000 men, by closing upon them in the angle which the Rhine forms between Strasburg and Constance. Such a possibility was much less obvious to him at the time; for the idea is not even suggested in any of the instructions addressed to Moreau, nor is there any trace of it in the despatches addressed either to Berthier or to Masséna. To Moreau he simply said: '*The aim of your movement in Germany must be to drive the enemy into Bavaria, so as to intercept the direct communication with Milan by the Lake of Constance and the Grisons.*'[1] And in the despatch addressed fifteen days later to Masséna he repeated that Moreau's work was to advance into Bavaria, so as to intercept by his position the communication of Germany with Milan by the Feldkirch-Coire route and the Italian bailiwicks of Switzerland.[2] All Moreau's operations were therefore to be directed to this end, to drive Kray back into the valley of the Danube, and to cut him off, not from Germany, with which an army so inferior in number would have been hazardous, but from Switzerland and Italy. The better to assure this result, Lecourbe, with a reserve composed of the fourth of Moreau's army, was specially to guard Switzerland and the passes leading into Italy. It was after this that the First Consul proposed himself to take the field with the army of reserve. This army was to reach by the commencement of May an effective force of

[1] *Correspondance: à Moreau*, 22 *Mars*, 1800.
[2] Ibid. *à Masséna*, 9 *Avril*.

from fifty to sixty thousand men. Bonaparte then, availing himself of the passes leading from Switzerland into Lombardy and Piedmont, would descend into Italy either by the Splugen,[1] the St. Gothard, the Simplon, or the Great St. Bernard, as occasion might direct; for he had formed no definite plan on this point. He would take up on his road Lecourbe's 25,000 men, who were to be detached from Moreau's army, and descend suddenly upon the rear of Mélas, who was still engaged with the maritime posts on the Gulf of Genoa. The Austrian general would thus find himself shut in between the army of Masséna and that of Bonaparte.

This plan was undoubtedly one of the boldest and most brilliant inspirations of genius; but as the event proved it could lead to no conclusion, because it removed the war from its true arena. In any case, it was as far as possible from being, as was afterwards pretended, a sacrifice to Moreau's personal feeling, for it made all his operations subordinate to those of the army of Italy, which ought in the nature of things to have been simply secondary; it paralysed Moreau by laying him under orders to manœuvre only on 'the right bank of the Danube;' and lastly, it stopped him short in his march by forbidding him to go beyond Ulm, and by withdrawing from him a quarter of his army at the very moment of reaping the fruits of his victory. It required, on the contrary, much self-abnegation to accept conditions so hard to fulfil, and to enact a part of which the glory was so unequal to the danger. Moreau nevertheless acquiesced in the plan as a whole; he raised objections only to the passage of the Rhine, about which his views differed from those of General Bonaparte. That passage as well as his other movements he would be left free to effect after his own manner,—a very legitimate claim in a commander of such high authority. Bonaparte need have been at no loss to comprehend it, while he had in memory his own rejection of plans sent to him by the Directory. Instructions issued at a distance from the seat of war are liable to many objections. The directions sent

[1] This was his first plan. *Correspondance, note du* 18 *Février.*

to Moreau were indeed the directions of a man of genius; but he had never himself carried on operations on this particular field, while General Moreau was on ground rendered famous by his victories, and which he knew better than any other officer in Europe. Besides, a man can only execute thoroughly well what he has himself conceived.

True to his character, which was never to leave anything to chance, Moreau judged that to cross the Rhine at a single point between Schaffhausen and Constance would be an operation too dangerous in the presence of Kray's 120,000 men, with the immense facilities of concentration given them by their position at Donaueschingen. The event fully proved the correctness of his judgment, since Kray, though completely misled by his manœuvres, was yet able to bring a large force upon the field of battle at Engen. Under the conditions laid down by Bonaparte, success would have been more than doubtful, while defeat was irreparable.

To this perilous passage, which would have to be effected by main force and under the fire of a formidable foe, Moreau preferred a plan which would enable him to make use of our many bridges over the Rhine, and which, making the operation extend from Strasburg to Schaffhausen, would be likely to draw Kray towards the Lower Rhine and across the Black Forest, while he himself would throw the bulk of his army across the river a little above the lake of Constance.

He sent his brigade-major Dessolles to Paris, to explain and defend his views, which were adopted in their entirety after a tolerably prolonged resistance on the part of the First Consul. Dessolles replied to his persistent objections by offering Moreau's resignation, which put an end to the debate. This eminent officer, whose military reports are a model of their kind, took care himself to preserve an account of this curious dissension in a document of rare historic value.[1] It proves the utter falsity of the allegations

[1] Letter of Dessolles to the Marquis de Carrion-Nisas (*Mémorial du dépôt de la Guerre*). It is confirmed by a letter of General Guilleminot.

contained in the *Mémoires* of Napoleon, and subsequently in those of St. Cyr, on the subject of a pretended *middle plan* by which Bonaparte modified Moreau's 'routine.' Moreau had but one plan, which was adopted just as it stood, and the only result of the efforts of Bonaparte to enforce his own ideas was a delay of more than a month in the opening of the campaign.

This famous controversy was not therefore what the tongue of slander has represented it, and so far from detracting at all from the character of Moreau, it does honour at once to his dignity and to his disinterestedness. Moreau had sufficiently shown his willingness to stoop by accepting for his army a dependent and waiting posture, instead of the active and leading part which might naturally have belonged to it; but he firmly maintained his freedom of initiating his own methods of execution, and this independence so stung the First Consul, that he allowed his irritation to burst forth unrestrained in the presence of Dessolles and Berthier. He exclaimed that Moreau was incapable of comprehending him; but judging it not prudent to withdraw the command from his hands, he dissembled again with his accustomed adroitness. The very day that Dessolles quitted Paris, Bonaparte wrote to Moreau: 'The general will tell you that no one takes a more lively interest than I in your personal honour and welfare. The English are embarking in large numbers; what do they mean? I am to-day a sort of puppet, who has lost liberty and happiness. Greatness is very fine, but in memory and imagination I envy your happy lot. You are about to do noble deeds with brave men. *I would willingly barter my consular purple for the epaulette of a brigadier under you!*' (March 16).

How can we reconcile this plaintive and modest strain with his own avowal, that he had been on the point of leaving Paris himself to assume the command of Moreau's army; and how believe him when he writes[1] that '*Moreau was at this time held in no esteem either by the nation or the army;*' and that his place might easily have been filled by

[1] *Mémoires: notes et mélanges.*

another general? The truth is that he felt himself bound at this crisis to use great circumspection in his dealings with Moreau, a course required by the exceptional position of his old rival. Moreau was not popular in the common acceptation of the word. There was about him a reserve and a simplicity little adapted to secure that sort of success, but his character was held in high esteem. Two acts of weakness had sullied his once unspotted fame: the one, his tardy denunciation of the Pichegru conspiracy; the other, his short-sighted co-operation on the 18th Brumaire. He had atoned for the first error by consenting to serve in obscurity under Schérer to regain his rank, and by saving an army that was regarded as lost. He was burning to efface the second stain by new services. Neither of these false steps had been able to mar the uprightness of his character, his genuine modesty in the midst of brilliant successes, his immovable firmness under reverses, his disinterestedness, his abhorrence of all intrigue and all charlatanry.

While waiting for Moreau to open the campaign, which he was unable to do for want of provisions and the necessaries of war, Bonaparte pressed on the organisation of the army of reserve, which was to be the first of all these great military operations. He accelerated the invisible march of these battalions, which, to use his own expression, were measuring France in all directions; he hurried on the instruction of the recruits, and despatched vast supplies of provisions and munitions of war to Geneva, Lausanne, and Villeneuve. Before the end of April, this army numbered 50,000 men 'capable of instant service,'[1] while its existence continued to be steadily denied even in the war department, which had been sedulously kept out of the secret. The Aulic Council at Vienna was indeed warned of the destination of the army of reserve, but it attached no importance to the information.[2] Bonaparte made his brigade-major Berthier general of this army, supplying his place in the ministry of war by Carnot, who, true to his inveterate habit of regarding himself as a man of the first importance,

[1] *Correspondance: à Berthier*, April 26.
[2] *De Bulow: Campagne de* 1800.

brought to the First Consul the support of his great civic reputation, forgetting that it was not for an outlaw of Fructidor to serve the Government of Brumaire.

These 50,000 men united with the 20,000 of Lecourbe's forces, which Moreau had pledged himself by a regular treaty to detach from his army (a strange and unusual method of proceeding, marking the distrust of Bonaparte), so as to form with Masséna's 25,000 men a total of about 100,000, a number more than sufficient to annihilate Mélas. Masséna's army is not generally included in this computation, which is an error, for in the critical moment it was able to paralyse a large part of the Austrian forces.

As was to be expected, hostilities first commenced on the Apennines. The instructions of the First Consul enjoined upon Masséna to give himself no concern about maintaining his communications with France. His directions were to concentrate in and around Genoa four-fifths of his forces, leaving the rest in important positions along the shore as far as Nice. In case of simultaneous attacks, to engage only in one, so as to bring all his strength to bear on a single point; to attract the enemy upon himself by exaggerating his forces and proclaiming the speedy arrival of succours from the interior, so as to divert attention from the St. Gothard and the Simplon, which were the true points of attack; lastly, to hold on in his position to the very last extremity, till he should be relieved by the army of reserve. These were the orders given to Masséna,[1] orders stamped deep with genius, but which show once more how difficult it is to direct a military operation from a distance. Masséna was in fact forced to scatter his troops to forage for themselves, and that he might eke out the scanty stock of provisions he had at Genoa. He has been often and sharply reproached for not having carried out the instructions of Bonaparte; while the fact is, that if he had followed them to the letter and kept Suchet's 12,000 men in Genoa, he would have been forced to surrender the place a fortnight earlier, and Marengo would have been impossible.

[1] *Correspondance: à Masséna*, 5th and 12th March, 9th April, 1800.

Masséna's army stretched then from Settepani and Rocca Barbena to the positions of Recco and Toriglio beyond Genoa. It guarded all the defiles of the Apennines leading down to that part of the shore, the other passes being still closed by the snow. Masséna's dispositions were, however, still incomplete, when on the 6th of April he found himself assailed at all points by the sudden descent of Mélas. Leaving 30,000 men in Piedmont and Lombardy, to guard the immense line of Alpine passes against an attack in which he did not believe, the Austrian general threw himself upon the Apennines with 90,000 men, intending to cut the French army in two, and to shut up Masséna in Genoa. The first of these results was easy to attain, on account of the extent of our line, which occupied nearly five-and-thirty leagues, and on account of the advantages which Mélas enjoyed from his concentric position. The second result would follow as a consequence of the first. After a long resistance, our line was broken at the Col di Cadibone, and Suchet, who formed our left, was cut off from the army, and thrown back upon Borghetto, while Mélas established himself strongly at Vado, so as to render any attempt at a reunion impossible. On our extreme right we were still more unfortunate. Miollis had there been driven from his positions at Toriglio and Recco; the enemy had forced him back into Genoa, and had then taken possession of the heights commanding the town from that side. The peril was pressing; the English fleet was blockading the port; the sight of the Austrian batteries terrified the inhabitants. In spite of all that nature and art had done to make this place impregnable, its defence was impossible so long as these positions were not recovered.

The next morning, April 7, at break of day, Masséna had the gates of the city opened, and issued from them at the head of the division that had been defeated the previous evening, and of part of the reserve. He took in the rear the heights occupied by the enemy, and drove them down into the ravines. Ott, who was commanding the body, was thrown back in disorder upon the Apennines;

our troops resumed their position at Toriglio, and in the evening Masséna re-entered Genoa with 1500 prisoners, amid the acclamations of the people. On the following days, he endeavoured, in spite of the overwhelming superiority of the enemy, to drive back the Austrians beyond the Apennines, combining his movements with an offensive attempt of Suchet's. But his columns, compelled by the nature of the ground to disperse, and outflanked in every direction by the tenfold larger forces of the enemy, could not succeed in establishing their communication with Suchet's corps, in spite of the intrepidity and constancy they displayed in every encounter. They inflicted heavy losses on the Austrians, got the better of them in almost every struggle, took some thousands of prisoners, but, enfeebled by their very successes, they were compelled little by little to give ground. Masséna had to admit the impossibility of continuing the campaign, and to resign himself to the self-sacrificing part which the First Consul had allotted to him. He succeeded at least in immortalising it by his heroism. On the 21st of April he finally shut himself up in Genoa, resolved to defend it to the last extremity, and from that day commenced those prolonged and terrible ordeals which have rendered this siege so memorable.

Masséna's position was well understood at Paris; it was known that he had barely a month's provisions. The First Consul, whose objections to Moreau's plans were the cause of more than a month's delay, now pressed him to open the campaign, while he at the same time stirred up the activity of Berthier. But the vast preparations made for the army of reserve absorbed almost all our resources, and Moreau was in want of provisions, horses, pontoon-trains. 'Strike some telling blow as soon as possible, so as by a diversion to favour the operations in Italy. Every day of delay is fatal to us,' wrote Bonaparte to Moreau on the 24th of April. Moreau was no less conscious of the urgency of the case, and resolving to proceed, notwithstanding the insufficiency of his material, he opened the campaign the very next day, April 25, 1800.

The plan substituted by him for that of the First Consul,

which he had rejected as too hazardous, was to make use of the bridges we had at Strasburg, at Brisach, and at Basle, and to cross the Rhine along this whole line, instead of attempting the passage at one point only with the chance, it is true, of a much more brilliant advantage, but also with the possibility of incalculable disaster. Moreau was both by conviction and temperament opposed to desperate ventures; and it is simple justice to admit that he was influenced in his conduct no less by patriotic scruples than by the wisdom and prudence natural to him. He did not consider that he had a right to hazard the forces and resources of his country, as adventurers are wont to hazard their own fortune, staking all on a single throw, and accepting with it the alternative of boundless success or utter ruin. The glory and interests of a nation which occupied so large a place in the world ought not, he held, to be exposed to the same hazards as the gains of an ambitious speculator, whose profit or loss may be simply his own. In this respect the views of Moreau differed from those of the conquerors who have been too often made the subjects of adulation in history; but they were views worthy of a soldier-citizen, and such as every free people might well desire to see in its captains.

The passage of the Rhine was in Moreau's plan a secondary operation. The real difficulty with him was how to get his troops beyond the Black Forest, all the outlets of which were guarded by a formidable enemy. To obtain this result, he divided his army into four bodies. The first, commanded by Sainte Suzanne, crossed the Rhine at Strasburg; the second, under the orders of Saint Cyr, at Old Brisach; the third, under his own eye, took the river at Basle; the fourth, led by Lecourbe, was to wait at Schaffhausen for tidings of the success of these first movements, which would enable him in his turn to act. Sainte Suzanne and Saint Cyr, after having dispersed the troops placed by Marshal Kray to guard the right bank of the river, took up a position in front of the defiles of the Renchen, Kinzig, and the Val d'Enfer, as though they intended to force their way through it and plunge into

the Black Forest. There they remained nearly two whole days.

Misled by these demonstrations, Kray, instead of keeping his forces concentrated at Donaueschingen, and awaiting our troops at the mouth of the defiles, despatched a strong detachment to oppose our passage. This was precisely what Moreau desired. Sainte Suzanne at once retreated, re-crossing the river at Strasburg; then, ascending it as far as Brisach, he crossed again so as to take the place of Saint Cyr before Friburg; while Saint Cyr, marching along the sides of the mountains by paths that were ill guarded because they were supposed to be impracticable, effected a junction at Saint Blaise on the Alb with Moreau's corps. The next day they were on the Wutach, which enabled Lecourbe, in his turn, to cross the Rhine at Schaffhausen, and thus all Moreau's troops were recruited on this line, with the exception of Sainte Suzanne's corps; and he, finding the enemy beating a retreat down the Val d'Enfer in consequence of these movements, dashed into it himself in his pursuit, so as to rejoin us by the most direct route.

Moreau's plans had been so well conceived, and his dispositions so skilfully made, that this complicated operation, conducted along a line forty leagues in extent, was executed with all the precision of a field manœuvre, though it involved a long series of separate combats. The severe criticisms which have been passed upon the operation are based on that which Kray might or should have done to frustrate it; but there is no victory which, on such calculations, might not be turned into a defeat. Setting aside idle hypotheses, it may fairly be said that the best proof of the excellence of the plan was that, in spite of the undoubted skill of the adversary, Moreau's success was never for a moment doubtful.

This great obstacle being thus surmounted, Moreau applied himself to the task of driving back the Austrian army upon the Danube, according to the plans agreed upon with Bonaparte. Making it his first aim to remove it to as great a distance as possible from Switzerland and the

Vorarlberg, so as to free the approaches into Italy, he sent Lecourbe forward with 25,000 men upon Stokach, at the extreme left of Kray, where the enemy's magazines were. He himself marched upon Engen, directing Saint Cyr to come to him by way of Thengen, while endeavouring to contrive a communication with Sainte Suzanne, who was still engaged in the Val d'Enfer. At Engen he met Kray's army. That general, who had not yet concentrated all his forces on account of the great movements which Moreau's operations had compelled him to make, was leading one of his corps to the succour of Stokach, when he found himself unexpectedly confronted with Moreau's centre. Moreau had only 25,000 men to oppose to 40,000; but feeling confident of Lecourbe's success in the attack upon Stokach, which he had ascertained to be ill guarded, and knowing Saint Cyr to be within reach, he did not hesitate to give battle. He knew that if he could only hold out through the day, the enemy would be forced into a retreat. Victory was sharply contested at Ehingen and Hohenhowen. These positions had been repeatedly taken and retaken, and Moreau was still sustaining without detriment the unequal conflict, when the long-looked-for appearance of a brigade of Saint Cyr's, whose main body had been detained by a succession of petty combats, and the expected tidings of the capture of Stokach by Lecourbe, decided the victory in our favour. Kray retreated to the Danube, leaving behind 5000 prisoners, 3000 dead, and immense stores (May 3, 1800).

The next day but one, the Austrian general having rallied the corps of the Prince de Vaudemont and some divisions gathered from the Black Forest, established himself in a strong position at Möesskirch, to try fortune afresh. There a second engagement, more sanguinary than the first, took place between the two armies. The heights of Möesskirch and the plateau of Krumbach, surmounted by formidable artillery, and attacked in front by our columns, were defended with desperate courage. But the village of Heudorf, on the right of the Austrians, being at length carried by us, after being repeatedly taken and retaken, and Vandamme, who

had been sent in the morning to turn the enemy at Klosterwald, falling now upon their left, all the heights were taken in succession, in spite of a long and furious resistance.

The defeat would have been turned into a complete rout but for the inexplicable inaction of Saint Cyr, who remained the whole day stationary at Liptingen within sound of the cannonading. He pretended that he had not received the aides-de-camp despatched to him by Moreau. But he had a formal command to join the movements of the reserve,[1] and the importance of the action going on clearly indicated his duty. Irritated against his chief by some differences of opinion, always disposed to isolate himself, and resolved, as he himself wrote, 'to confine himself to the strict execution' of orders, which often need to be interpreted, this general, whose military talents are beyond question, was rightly or wrongly dissatisfied with Moreau's staff. But, whatever his grievances may have been, he had no right to avenge himself by compromising the safety of the army. By his delays at Engen, and his non-appearance at Möesskirch, he twice prevented Moreau from profiting by his victory.

Moreau showed himself generous. He not only allowed Saint Cyr to retain his command, but he had him excused in Dessolles' report, on the ground that his officers were not able to reach him, and abstained from making any complaint himself, judging it needless, when the whole army was unanimous in blaming him. He received the usual reward of forbearance in the false and calumnious criticisms which Saint Cyr passed in later years upon the conduct and character of his former commander.[2]

The double necessity imposed upon Moreau of manœuvring only on the right bank of the Danube and of watching the passes of the Vorarlberg and the Tyrol, in order to conform to the exigencies of the plan determined on by the First Consul, prevented him from pursuing Kray beyond the Danube. He was fain to content himself, therefore, with marching upon the Iller, in union with Sainte Suzanne's corps, which had at length been able to effect the junction,

[1] *Dessolles à Saint Cyr*, 4th May 1800.

[2] See the *Mémoires Militaires du Maréchal Gouvion Saint Cyr.*

having his left to the Danube and his right towards the Vorarlberg, never dreaming that the enemy would remain stationary before Ulm.

But Marshal Kray could not make up his mind to abandon without a struggle his magazines at Biberach, and re-crossing the river he took up his position on the Mettenberg beyond that place. Our centre, commanded by Saint Cyr, who had received orders to occupy the town, did not hesitate to attack the Austrians, notwithstanding the strength of their position and the superiority of their numbers. Seconded by the Richepanse division, Saint Cyr overthrew their vanguard, and took possession of Biberach; then he fell upon the main body of their army upon the slopes of the Mettenberg with such resolution and intrepidity that the whole mass reeled in terror and beat a retreat, imagining that the entire French army was upon them. On the day following that on which Saint Cyr condoned his errors by this brilliant exploit, Lecourbe took Memmingen, with 1800 prisoners, and Marshal Kray finally retreated upon Ulm (May 10).

Since the opening of this campaign, subsequently made the subject of such unjust criticism, Moreau had gained five victories in a fortnight; he had weakened Kray by 30,000 men; he had driven him from a position which seemed invulnerable, and thrust him back defeated and humbled for forty leagues; he had, in a word, carried out, step by step, the programme he had traced for himself beforehand, not failing in one of its difficult conditions, leaving nothing to chance, following out his own method, which, if somewhat slow, was sure, and careful of the lives of his men. All this he had done without noise, without official notification, without display, merely announcing his successes in a letter of a few lines, admirable for their simplicity,[1] and leaving his brigade-major to give the details. And now, when by the avowal of all historians, and of Napoleon himself,[2] but one steady march forward was required,

[1] Dated May 6th, from Klosterwald.

[2] *Remarques sur les manœuvres autour d'Ulm.* With his usual bad faith, he reproached Moreau with not having marched upon Augsburg

and the intrenched camp at Ulm would fall without a struggle; when Vienna was covered only by a disheartened army; when he was at a distance of but three days from that Hohenlinden which would have placed the Austrian monarchy defenceless within his grasp, he was compelled to halt in the full tide of success, and to weaken his army by 20,000 men, whom he had to detach upon the St. Gothard, in order that his old rival might enter Italy, and reap all the fruit and all the honour of victory. Contemporaries have been severe on Moreau's faults. He was too honest, and had not the charlatanism which makes them pass for virtues. Even his rare qualities proved of small account in his favour, because they were not of the kind which strike and impress the popular mind. But we, who cannot allow ourselves to be dazzled by the same glamour, must do greater justice to the unassuming disinterestedness and the true greatness of which he gave proof under these difficult circumstances.

The First Consul was so conscious of the extent of the sacrifice which he demanded of Moreau in the critical situation in which that general was placed, that, fearing on his part a refusal to obey (which would have been only an imitation of his own conduct towards the Directory), he sent him express orders to effect at once the detachment of troops agreed upon, by a decree signed by the three consuls, under date May 5th, and conveyed to him by Carnot in person. Moreau had never entertained any thought of eluding this engagement, but he felt a very natural resentment at being thus compelled to abandon the great prize of his successes by the compulsory diminution of his troops—a diminution of which he was the more sensible, since his army had already sustained heavy losses. He insisted, however, on keeping Lecourbe—a delicate tribute, and worthy of the singular merit of that excellent officer. The quarter of his army was not now 25,000, but about 20,000 men, and such was in round numbers the

and Munich, forgetting that his own instructions had expressly forbidden him to *go beyond Ulm*.

force which, under the orders of Moncey, took the road to the St. Gothard.

This route was only secondary in the plan of the First Consul. He had given it up as far as the army of reserve was concerned; he had also abandoned the idea of the Simplon, finding there would be greater advantages in passing by the Great St. Bernard, which, while it took him a little farther from Milan, would enable him to march more rapidly upon Tortona, if this should become necessary, in order to relieve Masséna.[1] By a happy chance, this route over the Great St. Bernard proved, on the report of General Marescot, who was commissioned, somewhat tardily, to investigate the passes, to be the most practicable of those which lead from the Alps into Italy, with the exception of Mont Cenis, and the situation of that was not favourable for the projected operation; and of the Little St. Bernard, a route then practicable for vehicles, as was soon proved by the passage of forty-six pieces of artillery upon their gun-carriages. But in the haste of the survey, for which Marescot had only four or five days, these advantages were not at the time fully known.

This project of crossing the Alps, which has been in many respects so justly applauded, was not characterised in all its parts by the same circumspection and foresight of which the first campaign in Italy, with all its boldness, presented so admirable a model. Not only did it place success at the mercy of an indiscretion, or even of the failure of exact information received in time, but the details of the execution had been badly calculated, an inevitable consequence of the disproportion between the enterprise and the means at command. The greater part of the plans made for the transport of material had to be modified by the way. The very existence of the Fort of Bard, which might have arrested the whole undertaking, was hardly suspected, and certainly no one had any idea of its import-

[1] *Correspondance: à Berthier*, April 27. This was the determining consideration with him, as he himself states in this document. As to the strategical reasons which some historians adduce, they are purely imaginary.

ance. The general of the army of Italy in 1796 displayed more wisdom and vigilance. But the campaign in Egypt, and the extraordinary hazards which had accompanied and followed that expedition, had developed to excess the natural tendency of his mind towards the marvellous, the gigantic, the grandiose. Thus, the whole plan of this campaign was conceived as a magnificent scenic effect, designed to raise to a still higher pitch the astonishment already excited by his prodigious exploits. This was, in the eyes of Bonaparte, the principal end to be attained; peace was but an accessory. Independently of the dangers presented by this long defile through narrow gorges, where a few thousand men could hold in check an entire army, the attempt to surround Mélas on a line which must extend from Lake Maggiore to the Apennines, with an army inferior in force, presented perils no less considerable, and was an operation quite as hazardous as the former. But what grave possibility of reverse could balance the brilliant possibility of such a success in the eyes of a man who believed in his happy star, and who to the last experienced something like the gambler's exquisite delight in proving its faithfulness? As to asking himself if he had the right to sport with the destiny of a nation, as he loved to sport with his own, that was an idea to the height of which he never rose. Success is generally held to be a sufficient reply to every question; but when a success, however prodigious, proves by the manner of its attainment and the instincts to which it bears witness, that it carries within itself the possibility of a ruinous reverse, there is simply a want of reason in yielding to it unreserved admiration.

It was long unknown at Paris that the First Consul was to take a command in the new campaign. He had carefully concealed his intention in this respect, and it was the better to mask his designs that he made some show of committing the army of reserve to Berthier. 'I do not mean to take the part of general,' he used to say in his private conversations; 'if I go, it will be simply for a review.'[1] He feared to alienate public opinion, to appear

[1] *Mémoires* by Miot de Mélito.

to show an ambitious desire to monopolise all honour in the state, to displease his companions in arms by interfering in matters to which they felt themselves competent, and snatching from them honours which they had perhaps counted upon as henceforth undividedly their own. Lastly, he feared to furnish a weapon to his adversaries. The Constitution of the Year VIII, in fact, in appointing responsible ministers, and assigning to the First Consul the nomination of all officers by land and sea, naturally excluded him from all these secondary functions in virtue of his own primary one, which was to govern. '*The principles of that Constitution*,' he himself said, '*did not permit the First Consul to take this command.*[1] As the Consular magistracy was essentially civil, the principle of the division of powers, and the responsibility of the ministers, did not justify the first magistrate of the Republic in taking the direct command in chief of an army; *but there was no provision, as there was no principle, to prevent his being present in the army.* In fact, therefore, the First Consul commanded the army of reserve, and Berthier, his staff commander, had the title of general-in-chief.'

By virtue of this singular distinction, which shows with perfect clearness the meaning attached by Napoleon to the word *principle*, the First Consul saw his way to donning the uniform of the soldier without being untrue to his duties as head of the Government. But the apprehensions which had suggested to him these disguises, so unworthy of a great power, had no real foundation. The public was not so wholly duped as Bonaparte might believe. In spite of the purely fictitious provisions established by the Constitution of the Year VIII, no one in Paris regarded the Consular Government as a civil magistracy. Every one knew that the military power was all in all, and the very Tribunate which was accused of systematic opposition was the first to express the wish 'that the First Consul might return, bringing victory and peace.' In this the Tribunes were doubtless actuated by good feeling and the desire to appease and disarm their enemy. But they committed an error,

[1] *Mémoires de Napoléon* (Marengo).

since they had no right to abandon one of the guarantees given them by the Constitution, however empty that guarantee might prove.

Bonaparte quitted Paris on the 6th of May, leaving instructions with his colleagues that were summed up in one line which he wrote to them three days after from Genoa, —'Strike vigorously the first who should break from the rank.'[1] He found the preparations for crossing almost completed. Vast supplies had been easily conveyed from Geneva to Villeneuve, by means of the lake, and from thence had been sent on to various stages along the route to Saint Maurice, Martigny, and Saint Pierre. The artillery stores had been loaded on mules bought in the country and accustomed to these difficult roads; the gun-carriages had been dismounted so as to be less bulky and weighty. The only real difficulty was the transport of the cannon. They were obliged to abandon the wheeled trucks which had been constructed for the purpose, and the great difficulty was to devise some means of hoisting up the pieces without injuring them. At length Marmont, who had the chief command of the artillery, and who displayed on this occasion great resources of intelligence and great activity, conceived the ingenious idea of hollowing out trunks of trees so as to encase the pieces of artillery. Thus ensheathed, a hundred soldiers, arranged in relays up the side of the mountain, succeeded in dragging them to the summit, to the sound of military music. There food and refreshment prepared at the convent of Saint Bernard recruited their energies, and prepared them to commence courageously the operation of the descent, which was especially perilous for the horses. The horsemen all walked, leading their steeds by the bridle. At St. Rémy, at the foot of the Italian slope of the St. Bernard, a workshop was established in which the gun-carriages were put together and the pieces remounted. The entire army crossed the mountain between the 15th and the 20th of May, and Bonaparte himself passed over with the rear-guard by day on the 20th. The accidents were

[1] To the Consuls, 9th May 1800.

few, the fine weather continued unbroken; the avalanches, which have been so much talked of in connection with this passage, never once interrupted the march of the soldiers.

Thus this grand operation was accomplished. The success of its execution equalled the boldness of the conception; but it is far from meriting the extravagant eulogies that have been heaped upon it. The plan of which it formed a part was undoubtedly a creation of genius, but in itself it presented only material difficulties, which were tolerably easily overcome. It is doing injustice to truly grand enterprises to bestow such inordinate praise on an operation of this inferior order, which could have been accomplished by any skilful general, with sufficient mechanical appliances at command. Many times in the middle ages and during the course of our wars in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, our armies had crossed the Alps, when these passages were necessarily less open and less easy, and no one raised any cry of miracle. But so soon as Bonaparte undertakes it, there is a rapture of applause, and it is '*a prodigy greater than that of Hannibal*.'[1] Men thus calmly compare our passage of the St. Bernard, undertaken on our own frontier, by a road known and frequented for ages, with all the resources of a centralised nation, and all the advantages of modern science, with the march of the Carthaginian hero, accomplished at a distance of five hundred leagues from his own country, without any base of operations, without hope of help, with only some vague geographical notions to guide him across a wild and unknown country, in which he had to cut his own way as he advanced, and to conduct over Alpine snows his Numidian horse, his elephants, and his Africans, ill accustomed to such a climate, sustaining and animating with the fire of his own glowing soul an army composed of a hundred various elements of which he alone was the uniting bond. And yet Hannibal is declared to have been outdone by Bonaparte! We can understand how contemporary sycophancy may have seized on a parallel so likely to flatter the

[1] Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*.

vanity of the conqueror. In our own day there is nothing but childishness in upholding such a comparison.

The vanguard commanded by Lannes had passed Aosta and Châtillon without encountering any obstacles sufficient to arrest it, when it suddenly found itself confronted with the Fort of Bard. This little fastness, constructed upon a point of rock which completely closed the passage, was guarded by only two or three hundred men; but it formed an impassable barrier, and Lannes at once recognised the impossibility of taking it by main force. He managed to effect a lodgment in the town, and to gain possession of the road which led through it; but the fire of the fort was fatal to all who attempted to pass. The alarm rapidly spread through the army, and Berthier was just suspending the forward march, when a footpath was discovered along the mountain, and this was soon rendered practicable for horses. Even this unexpected way of escape, however, would not avail for the artillery, and if there had been no alternative but to await the capture of the fort, then, as Napoleon himself wrote, the whole hope of the campaign would have been lost. A stratagem of Marmont's delivered the army out of this difficulty. Taking advantage of a dark night, he laid down a bed of straw and dung along the road, wrapped in tow the cannon, gun-carriages, and everything that might make a sound, harnessed men instead of horses, and then made them defile in deep silence beneath the batteries of the sleeping fort.

The alarm was given, and some men fell under the fire from the fortress, but that did not hinder the artillery from getting safely past. This obstacle once overcome, the army swept down into Italy like a torrent, no serious precautions having been taken to impede them. Lannes took Ivrea by assault, and a few days afterwards he routed the Austrians at Chiusella (May 26th). Bonaparte's 45,000 men had taken up on their way the Chabran division, which had come by the Little St. Bernard; they were now going to join the 18,000 whom Moncey had brought over the St. Gothard. General Turreau with 4000 men was descending by Mont Cenis upon the flank of the enemy, and an Italian

detachment held the Simplon. All these troops formed together a mass of at least 70,000 men, and, as they were to act in combination with Masséna's army, their numbers would almost equal those of Mélas' now greatly diminished forces.

The progress of the Austrian general in Liguria had not been either so rapid or so decisive as he had at first anticipated. Leaving his lieutenant Ott in strong positions around Genoa, which they must henceforth be satisfied to blockade with 30,000 men, the Baron de Mélas had moved on to the Var with the rest of his army, driving before him Suchet's feeble force, which he vainly endeavoured to cut off by outflanking him at Ponte di Nave. Suchet repassed the Var in time with his 12,000 men, and, thanks to the works already executed at that point, he quickly put it into an excellent state of defence. When the Austrians presented themselves before this line early in May, they found it bristling with batteries and intrenched works. Several skirmishes, followed on the 14th of May by a general attack, soon proved to them the impossibility of taking it by force. During this time Masséna, whose provisions already began to fail, so that he was obliged to reduce his rations, harassed Ott's army by incessant sallies. Notwithstanding his losses, he continued to display undaunted energy, and was enabled to prolong his defence by means of the supplies brought to him now and then by boats that had eluded the English squadron. He shared his provisions with the famished townspeople, who took courage as they saw his imperturbable calmness, and day by day he led out against the enemy his emaciated soldiers, who were scarcely able to bear the weight of their arms.

Such was the condition of things on the Var and on the coast of Genoa, when on the 21st of May General Mélas, still persistently incredulous on the subject of the army of reserve, because he had made a serious survey only of Mont Cenis, received positive information of the passage of our troops over the St. Bernard. He immediately crossed the Col di Tenda with a detachment of 10,000 men. At Coni he learned the whole truth, and was so utterly stupefied

by the overwhelming tidings, that he seemed for a considerable time crushed under the weight of responsibility, and helplessly unable to decide what course to take. His army was, in fact, scattered almost beyond recall. He was at Turin with 10,000 men; Vukassowich, already threatened by Moncey, was watching the Simplon and the St. Gothard with about the same numbers; Haddik was with great difficulty bringing back from the Chiusella the remnants of his corps, under the fire of our vanguard, and the rest of the Austrian army, amounting to about 55,000 men, was stationary upon the Var and under the walls of Genoa.

It is clear from the correspondence of the First Consul that he had a marvellously accurate knowledge of the nearly desperate condition of the Austrian army at the time,—a knowledge gained through the daily advices he received from Suchet. What course should he select? In the present position of Mélas he was perfectly free to choose as he would. Should he at length fulfil his often-repeated promise, and go to the succour of Masséna and his brave men, whom he knew to be perishing of want and misery? Was it not due to these heroic and long-suffering troops to save them the humiliation of a surrender? Did he not owe them, in compensation for the long bitterness of hope deferred, the joy of seeing the enemy flee before the waving colours of their deliverers? Such a result was within easy reach. There was only the feeble corps of Mélas guarding the passage of the Po at Chivasso to be driven in, and the road to Genoa was clear. There was nothing short of the Apennines to arrest him, and, whatever he may have written on this subject, with objects easy to understand, he would not in any way have imperilled his line of retreat, for he would have left behind him Moncey's 18,000, Turreau's 4000, and Lecchi's detachment,—troops far more than sufficient to guard the communication and to destroy the remains of Mélas' army.

But a much more magnificent project had presented itself to his mind. He could no longer content himself with defeating the army of Mélas in detail, he would annihilate it at a single blow. With such an end to be attained, what

were the sufferings of the army of Genoa to him? He knew men too well not to be assured that all complaints and grievances would vanish in the tumult of triumph. Abandoning, then, the design which had led him to choose the St. Bernard in preference to the St. Gothard, in view of a more rapid march upon the Apennines, and turning a deaf ear to the desperate appeals of Masséna, he descended to Chivasso as if to cross the Po at that point, and then, when all expectation was fixed on a forward march to Genoa, he ordered a retrograde movement to the left, and directed the army upon Milan (May 27, 1800). This operation at length unmasked the combinations which had prepared the way for the final act of this great military trilogy. The armies of Masséna and of Moreau had only been serving to prepare the victory for Bonaparte by a double diversion, the one by retaining Mélas in Liguria, the other by engaging Kray on the Danube. Now Bonaparte in his turn was to appear on the scene to strike the grand blow, all the honour of which he had reserved for himself, leaving to Masséna the unenvied merit of an honourable but unsuccessful defence, and to Moreau himself that of a self-sacrifice unseen or unheeded. He was about in one day to reap the fruit of their long toils, and he proposed to make this final surprise so dazzling that the world should lose sight of everything but his share in the culminating success. Accustomed to consider everything in relation to himself, it seemed to him perfectly natural to sacrifice his comrades in arms to his own fortune, or simply to the desire to produce a greater effect upon the imagination of the world. By marching upon Milan he surrendered Masséna to the Austrians, but he made himself master of the line of the Po, and he had only to place himself between that river and the Apennines in order to cut off all retreat from Mélas.

That general could hope for no diversion to be effected by Kray. Even supposing the latter could have been apprised in time of the critical position of his colleague, he would have been unable to do anything for him, for Moreau formed an impenetrable barrier to any advance on his part

in the direction of Switzerland. Indeed, Kray was much more anxiously concerned at this time to sustain his position in Ulm than to quit it. Moreau, unable to venture an assault by main force, which would have put all the results of the campaign in hazard, had in vain endeavoured to draw Kray out of his intrenched position by feigned demonstrations. He had pledged himself to Bonaparte not to use the one manœuvre which would have been certainly effectual, a decided march upon Munich. A glance at the map is enough to show, whatever may have been said on the subject, that such a march would have left Switzerland, and consequently Italy, completely uncovered. Thus doomed to impotence and inaction, and the object of severe criticism from his lieutenants, who, not understanding his motives, were irritated by his procrastination, Moreau, to use his own expression, '*groped about Ulm*,'[1] impatiently waiting till Bonaparte's success should allow him to resume more active operations; and the very day when Bonaparte marched upon Milan, Moreau wrote to him explaining his situation and urging him to act.

General Bonaparte could therefore carry out his operations in all safety, for, in any event, he had a sure way of retreat by the St. Gothard and the Simplon. Having now only one end in view, that of enclosing Mélas in Piedmont, by raising an insuperable barrier in his way on the Lombardo-Venetian side, he must make it impossible for him to enter that province, first by strongly occupying the course of the Po from Pavia to Piacenza, and then by crossing the road which ran between the Po and the Apennines. He had the advantage of substituting for the upper Po the shorter and more solid line of the Ticino, which unites with that river above Pavia, forming by its junction a sort of natural barrier, extending from the Lake Maggiore to the Adriatic, and dividing North Italy in two. There was nothing in the way to prevent the execution of this plan.

At the same time, then, that the First Consul was

[1] *Moreau to the First Consul*, May 27, 1800. This letter clearly shows that he remained before Ulm only to avoid compromising the army of Italy.

marching upon Milan, and Lannes dashed upon Pavia, Duhesme and Loison occupied Crema and Pizzighettone, and Bethencourt the upper Ticino towards Arona. Finally, Murat advanced with two divisions upon Piacenza, the most important point on this line, because it at once cut off the communications of Mélas by sea and land. These positions being soon occupied, after a vain attempt of the Austrians to contest Piacenza, our army at once commenced crossing the Po at all points, in order to form in a body below the river at Stradella, the central point of the long defile formed by the last heights of the Apennines on the one side and the marshes of the Po on the other.

Regarded merely from a strategical point of view, it is difficult to imagine anything more admirably conceived than this plan. It has all the logic and rigour of a mathematical deduction; but, measured by the standard of the great interests which were its legitimate object, it is open to grave objections. Notwithstanding the genius displayed in its dispositions, it involved, in fact, such risks as no patriotic general would have ventured upon, while he had in his option other successes less brilliant, but safe and certain. By this plan Bonaparte sacrificed all the advantages of his first position; it compelled him to disperse his own troops, while it allowed Mélas to concentrate his, which we might have beaten with less resounding glory but with more ease in their then scattered condition, allowing only a few isolated corps to escape. It is always a dangerous operation to enclose an adversary on so extended a line, but to attempt it with an inferior force is to run the risk of almost inevitable disaster; and even a man possessed of matchless genius ought to hesitate before embarking on so hazardous an enterprise with an army which is the last bulwark of his country. Compelled to guard the course of the Po and the Ticino for a distance of at least thirty leagues, General Bonaparte could only lead about 30,000 men against the army of Mélas, part of which was, as it happened, to be rendered unavailing by the remains of Masséna's and Suchet's corps united. It was too great a venture, considering our forces, as the event soon proved. A desperate

necessity could alone have excused play for such tremendous stakes. There was too perceptible evidence in this scheme of that desire to astonish the world, that craving for the extraordinary, that striving after the prodigious, which was one day to prove fatal to Napoleon. It was making too great a sacrifice to the beauty and grandeur of a theatrical effect to renounce well-assured advantages for the sake of it, and to pursue a more dazzling victory with the possibility of an irreparable catastrophe. A man of lawless ambition might venture such a throw of fortune. A great citizen would have put it away from him.

Bonaparte had been at Milan since the 2d of June. Thus, as he wrote to Paris, he delivered the Lombards from the 'Austrian rod,' which had made them regret the rod of France. He restored the administration of the Cisalpine Republic. He called the Cisalpines to arms, and flattered them once more with the often-cheated hope of making them an independent nation. He chose Milan also for a manifestation of quite another kind, which he might have found it embarrassing to make in Paris, although it was intended for France rather than for Italy. He had long had in view a reconciliation with the Church, such as would enable him to utilise the clergy as instruments of his government; and he took advantage of his sojourn in Italy, and of the nearness of the great Catholic capital, to advance the negotiations by a solemn declaration of his sentiments of deference for the Holy Father, and of attachment to the Catholic faith. He called together the clergy of the city of Milan, reminded them of the protection he had extended to them at another period, assured them that their religion was also his, 'that he was ready to punish with the utmost severity and publicity, *even, if needful, with death, any one who should offer the least insult to their common religion, or should venture to attempt the slightest outrage on their sacred persons.*'

He then threw upon the Revolution, and upon the cruel policy of the Directory, the blame of the unhappy separation in France of the Church from the State, adding that experience had now convinced the French that 'there

is no religion more favourable to republican government than the Catholic religion.' France had again opened her eyes to the light; she had restored peace to the Church; he himself hoped soon to confer with its new head, that with his concurrence the last obstacles might be removed. He concluded by promising to restore to them their possessions, and by authorising them to publish his allocution, which was accordingly soon printed and circulated by thousands of copies throughout Italy and France. This manifestation was the preliminary of the Concordat. It took place on the 5th of June 1800. A year before, at the same time, the new Constantine was still in Egypt, vaunting before muftis and ulemas that he had '*destroyed the Pope and overthrown the Cross.*' This simple fact enables us to appreciate the genuineness of the profession of faith made before the clergy of Milan, and to divine the motive which prompted it. It is not difficult with these data to estimate the value and sincerity of the religious restorations he was on the eve of accomplishing.

Fêtes, banquets, orations, succeeded each other at Milan almost without interruption. The First Consul wished it to be known in Paris that his progress in Italy was one series of triumphs. He did not forget to mention this reception in the daily bulletins which he had issued from the commencement of the campaign, that not one of his achievements might be lost to history. 'The people of Milan,' he said in his bulletin of June 5th, 'appear quite ready to resume the tone of gaiety common to them in the time of the French. The General-in-Chief and the First Consul were present at a concert, which, though improvised, was extremely agreeable. *Italian singing has ever new charms. The famous Billington, Grassini, and Marchesi are expected at Milan.*'

While the time was gliding by so smoothly for Napoleon, Masséna's army was at Genoa in the last agonies of famine. For twelve days its only food had been a poisonous sort of bread made of cocoa and starch, a few ounces of which were distributed daily to every soldier. The inhabitants were reduced to the grass and roots which they unearthed

from the ramparts, and they were perishing by hundreds. Franceschi, Masséna's aide-de-camp, sent by him to the First Consul to urge him to hasten his march, had witnessed on the 20th of May the passage of the rear-guard over the St. Bernard, and on the 26th he re-entered Genoa with assurances of almost immediate succour. Eight days would be more than sufficient for General Bonaparte to traverse the forty leagues which lie between the Apennines and the Val d'Aosta. And yet fourteen fatal days had passed since the 20th of May, amid all the horrors of famine, and no tidings of him had come. The greater number believed he was beaten, and in flight. A few suspected the truth, and bitterly feeling that they were sacrificed to the vanity of the tactician, cursed his barbarous egotism.

On the 3d of June things were at the last extremity. Thousands of women dying of hunger went about the streets begging for bread, while the dead cart passed and repassed full of corpses, as in a city smitten with the plague.[1] It became impossible to prolong the resistance another day. Masséna yielded to save his perishing soldiers; but so resolute was the attitude he still maintained, and so great was the haste of the Austrians to rejoin Mélas, that he obtained the most honourable terms of capitulation. Ott had, in fact, just received orders to raise the siege, and could hardly conceal his joy at the surrender. Masséna did not leave a single prisoner in the hands of the Austrians. Out of his 15,000 men, only 8000 remained.

On the morning of the 5th of June, while Bonaparte was receiving the ovations of the Milanese, and lauding in his bulletin the talents of the Italian singers, a legion of famished spectres were issuing from the gates of Genoa, and presenting themselves at the Austrian outposts, where some rations had been prepared for them. From thence these brave men were free to make their way as best they could to Suchet's head-quarters. Masséna had taken ship, and landed at Antibes, supposing that Suchet's army was

[1] Journal of General Thiébaut.

still on the Var. On the 9th of June he reached Finale, and by the 13th was at Montenotte. Suchet had already started in pursuit of the Austrians, who had been compelled to relinquish the banks of the Var as well as the coast of Genoa. These were, therefore, nothing but base insinuations and calumnies,[1] by which Napoleon subsequently endeavoured to blacken the memory of the defender of Genoa, in a document which is a monument of cynical ingratitude, the sole recompense of the great and memorable service he received from Masséna.

Bonaparte did not leave Milan till the 9th of June. While he was assembling at Stradella all the forces that remained at his disposal after having covered with troops the line of the Ticino and the Po, from Lake Maggiore to Cremona, Mélas, who was concentrating his strength at Alessandria, made a fresh effort to regain possession of the road to Piacenza, before our dispositions were fully made. He directed against this point Ott's corps, which had arrived from Genoa, after Masséna's capitulation. Ott could not reach Piacenza without passing by Stradella, to which place our brigades were advancing by forced marches, to take up their positions. A little before this point, that is, between Casteggio and Montebello, he came in contact with Lannes' corps. Lannes' position was a very hazardous one, for Bonaparte regarded it as certain that any troops which might attack him just at this time '*must be less than* 10,000 *in number.*'[2] Owing to this mistaken calculation, Lannes had only about 8000 men to oppose to an army of more than double his own strength. But by his fire and spirit this general repaired all. He met with an unbending resistance the desperate efforts of the enemy to reopen the road, and the Chambarlhac division coming opportunely to his aid, he sent a brigade to turn the country town of Casteggio, where the Austrians were strongly intrenched; then, after repeatedly losing and retaking this position, we finally drove them back upon

[1] *The Mémoires Extraits des Papiers de Masséna*, by General Koch, remove all pretext for these imputations. See vol. iv.

[2] *Bonaparte à Berthier.* June 8, 1800.

Montebello with a loss of 7000 men, half of them killed, half prisoners. Bonaparte arrived from Milan just at the close of this glorious engagement, on the evening, that is, of the 9th of May.[1]

His instructions to General Suchet were summed up in this brief sentence: 'Keep in check a body equal to your own.'[2] This was the very programme which Suchet had faithfully followed out from the time of the Austrian retreat from the Var. Carefully watching them as they retired, he had contrived to reach the Col di Tenda before them, and thus compelled them to make a retrograde movement as far as Pieve. At Savona he picked up the remainder of Masséna's force, which raised his own army to 20,000 men, whom he led to Acqui, on the rear of Mélas. His presence at this point neutralised a part of the Austrian forces, and contributed powerfully to the success of Bonaparte's plan.

The First Consul was still at Stradella, occupied in consolidating his position and strengthening the vast net in which he hoped to enclose his adversary. He began to perceive that he had embraced too much to press very tight, for the necessity of guarding so extended a line made it impossible for him to keep himself adequately informed of the situation of the enemy, and he knew positively nothing of his dispositions. At one time he believed him to be hurrying to Genoa, where the English squadron would be waiting with supplies, and ready in case of need to transport him to some other point. Again he fancied him stealing a march upon the upper Po, and forcing the passage of the Ticino. He remained therefore stationary at Stradella during the 9th, 10th, and 11th days of June, harassed by perplexities which multiplied every hour. At length he could endure it no longer, and abandoning his almost impregnable position at Stradella, he moved in the direction

[1] He left Milan on the same day, the 9th, and not the evening before, as M. Thiers affirms. Had this been the case, he would have been twenty-four hours in traversing the ten leagues between Milan and Stradella.

[2] *Bonaparte à Suchet.* June 8.

of Alessandria to meet the enemy. He advanced beyond Tortona, as far as San Giuliano and Marengo, encountering only one small detachment, which yielded after a short engagement.

He was at the gates of Alessandria, in the midst of a vast plain, which extended in the one direction between the road and the Po, and in the other between two tributaries of that river, the Scrivia and the Bormida. His impatience and his perplexity, the just expiation of a too ambitious plan, had made him lose all the advantages of his first position; for in this vast plain the enemy could extend himself and handle cavalry with ease. Becoming more and more certain that Mélas had fled to Genoa, Bonaparte directed the Boudet division to march upon Novi, entrusting the command to Desaix, who had arrived at headquarters the evening before. Owing to the insufficient reconnaissances of the ground, he was not aware that the enemy had bridges over the Bormida, and having established his army at Marengo and in the environs, he himself went to pass the night a little in the rear at Torre di Garofolo.

Mélas had not left Alessandria. Obliged to confront Suchet and to leave garrisons in several places, he had not been able to collect at this point more than 40,000 men,—a number, however, that exceeded ours. After having deliberated in council over the various expedients open to him, he had decided to throw the responsibility of the issue on the Cabinet of Vienna, which had left him to the last moment in ignorance of the existence of our army of reserve, and had even enjoined on him not to concern himself about it. Instead, then, of seeking a possible way of escape by flight to the Ticino, or a retrograde march upon Genoa, he resolved to go straight at the enemy, whose army he supposed to be far larger than it really was, and to endeavour by main force to open a passage for himself by the Piacenza road.

This was the resolution formed after long indecision; and on the 14th of June, at break of day, the Austrian army slowly crossed the Bormida by three bridges and defiled

before Marengo, where General Victor's corps was stationed. The village, which was fortunately protected by a stream deep though not broad, was at once vigorously attacked. Covered by this natural barrier, Victor's soldiers received repeated assaults without wavering. At the same time Lannes, who occupied the plain between Marengo and Castel-Ceriolo, was assailed on all sides by Austrian troops. Both held their ground for a long while with invincible obstinacy, but about ten o'clock in the morning the Austrian army having achieved the passage of the Bormida, Baron Mélas assembled his principal corps, and supporting them by formidable artillery, dashed down once more upon Marengo, which was carried after a fearful carnage.

At this moment Bonaparte arrived on the field of battle, with his guns, his staff, and the Mounier division, supported by two regiments of cavalry. On our left, Victor's division was in complete rout; on our right, Lannes was retreating step by step in admirable order, giving ground only at the rate of a quarter of a league an hour, but enduring cruel losses. The fresh troops brought by the First Consul restored the battle. Instead of leading them to that part of the road which was being swept incessantly by the charges of the Austrian cavalry, he conducted them to the extreme right of Lannes, and on to the left of the enemy, who had to pass them to gain San Giuliano and to clear the Piacenza road. This manœuvre, which consisted in refusing combat on the point most essential to the enemy, and in transferring the action to a part of the ground to which his attention was less directed, was designed chiefly to gain time. But it was badly executed, owing to the extreme confusion into which our army had been thrown by the success of the Austrians. In spite of the solidity of the Consular guard and the heroic efforts of Lannes, one part of our troops was driven to retreat upon the road to San Giuliano; the other, which had for a short time occupied Castel-Ceriolo, retired to the right upon Sala.

Such was our position about three o'clock in the afternoon. Our army was on the point of being cut in two; one-half repulsed in the direction of Sala and the Po, the

other driven under the guns of Tortona. Our situation seemed so desperate that the aged Mélas, worn out with fatigue and secure of victory, returned to Alessandria, and sent couriers in all directions to proclaim his success, leaving to his brigade-major, M. de Zach, the task of completing our defeat.

A most unforeseen incident caused him cruelly to repent this error. Desaix, hurrying to the aid of the First Consul, arrived at this very moment upon the Plain of Marengo with the Boudet division. At the first sound of the cannon he had suspended his march upon Novi, and after assuring himself that no danger threatened us on that side, he hastened with all speed towards San Giuliano. He at once saw that the battle was lost, but he deemed it not impossible to gain upon the spot a second, which should repair the first. Marmont immediately collected the small number of our pieces which the enemy had not dismounted, and directed a heavy fire upon the main column, which was advancing across the plain commanded by M. de Zach in person. It was received with unwavering steadiness. Desaix then despatched against the column two half brigades, which for a moment stopped the Austrians in their march. In the midst of the shock of this movement Desaix fell dead with a ball in his heart. His brave troops, overwhelmed by numbers, gave ground, and the terrible column, which nothing seemed able to break, went on advancing, carrying everything before it, when Kellermann with his dragoons dashed upon it in flank with such suddenness and impetuosity that it was utterly broken. Surprised, without time to put itself in a defensive attitude in that direction, cut off from the rest of the Austrian army, it threw down its arms upon the field of battle, to the number of 6000 men. This prodigious and crushing blow changed in an instant the whole face of things; never was revolution witnessed in war more sudden and complete.

Our retrograde movement was brought to a halt; the fugitives rallied, and we resumed the offensive at all points. The Austrians, amazed, gave way in their turn. Then their troops broke; an unexampled panic spread through their

ranks, and their cavalry plunged over the infantry, to be first in crossing the bridges. The whole became one heaped-up mass of confusion, and those who could not crowd on to the bridges threw themselves into the Bormida. Almost the whole of the artillery remained in the hands of the French. The disaster was complete.

Such, so far as they can be traced through the mazes of contradictory narratives and the charlatanism of official statements, were the great crises of this famous battle. So extraordinary was the confusion of the fight, that, accustomed as Bonaparte was to rectify upon paper his military operations by arrangements made after the event, often imparting to them in this way an order and clearness which they did not actually possess, he found it impossible to give of this victory anything more than a shapeless report, without plan or sequence. He availed himself in this case of oratorical artifices, which, to some extent, hid the gaps in his narrative. One rhetorical phrase was put into the mouth of Desaix, who had fallen dead, struck in the heart by a ball, without uttering a single word, and whose body remained forsaken and spoiled on the battle-field.[1] Bonaparte makes him say, 'Go, tell the First Consul that I die with this regret,—that I have not done enough for posterity.' The impression to be cherished was, that the First Consul was the last thought of the dying, no less than the hope and pride of the survivors; and, to secure this dramatic effect he was not afraid to turn death itself to account.

During his reign he three times modified this bulletin, to make it read differently in history. In these three relations, which have been preserved in the *Mémorial de la Guerre*, we find him perpetually contradicting and falsifying himself. His own statement being once drawn up, he ordered all the original reports to be destroyed, that he himself might be the sole authority; but it is only in his memoirs that he succeeds in giving to his narrative a connected and definite form. It is a singular fact, and one which furnishes a gauge of the morality of these sanguinary games of war, that it was this battle, in which Bonaparte

[1] *Mémoires de Rovigo.*

displayed least genius, and fell most below himself, which insured to him the greatest results, at least so far as his own power and glory were concerned. The combinations which led to Marengo were admirably conceived, but they were eminently doubtful, hazardous,[1] and out of proportion to the means at our command. They were, in a word, the dispositions of an incomparable adept in the art of war, not of a patriotic general. As to the battle itself, it was given under the most unfavourable conditions, and the victory was due only to the happy accident of an opportune charge of cavalry. Napoleon himself wrote that 'all the chances of success in the battle were in favour of the Austrian army.' In contrast to so many battles of which it may be justly said that, being lost, they ought to have been gained, the battle of Marengo must have been lost but for an exceptional turn of fortune; and it does no honour to a matchless commander to put himself in circumstances in which nothing short of a miracle can save him, when the same end might have been attained by other means, less dazzling, but safe and effective. Marengo marks the point at which the adventurer begins to injure the Head of the State.

A general less utterly crushed than Mélas would have been anxious to try anew the fortune of war, whether by recommencing an attack, which had only failed through an unhappy chance, or by throwing himself with all his forces upon Suchet's corps, so as to reach Genoa. But, rather than hazard bold tactics of this sort, he preferred a suspension of arms, by virtue of which he evacuated the whole of North Italy as far as the Mincio and the lower Po, following a line which reached from Peschiera to Ferrara, but retaining Tuscany and Ancona. This convention, signed at Alessandria, was sent to the Emperor of Austria, with a long letter from the First Consul, who endeavoured to demonstrate by a formal disquisition and by all manner of

[1] This is expressly recognised by Jomini, when he says, after pointing out the danger of these dispositions, that Bonaparte would have '*all or nothing*,' and calls the battle of Marengo an *affray*. Such is also the opinion of Mathieu Dumas, when he says, 'Marengo was an enclosed field, where one of two armies must perish.'

philanthropic considerations, to his Majesty the Emperor and King, that it was his dearest interest to break with England, and ally himself with the French Government. This letter, 'departing from the customary style and forms,' as Bonaparte remarked some days after, in a communication to Talleyrand, and which he was astonished at himself for having written, was full of friendly counsels and protestations. It suppressed any resentment at the fact that his previous letters had received no reply, and his perseverance in thus addressing the emperor, notwithstanding an affront of that kind, gave sufficient proof of his ardent desire to treat on terms of equality with sovereigns by the grace of God.

While awaiting the reply of the emperor, he urged on the execution of the Articles of the Convention of Alessandria, pressing especially the surrender of the fortified places; and he then returned to Milan on the 17th of June. There he received in great state the acclamations of the people and the *Te Deums* of the clergy. He himself described this scene—a novel one at that time to the Parisians—in one of those bulletins which he continued to issue almost daily for their benefit, and which had become nearly the only publication that appeared in France, owing to the severity with which he had visited the press. Public opinion having no other aliment but this to feed upon, it became a necessity that he should be the single object of all attention. 'The First Consul,' he said, 'was received at the gate of the metropolis by the whole body of the clergy; he was led on to a daïs expressly prepared in the choir, and upon which the consuls and *first magistrates of the Empire of the West* were usually received.' To those accustomed to follow the soaring thoughts and boundless ambitions of Napoleon, that expression the *Empire of the West* was full of suggestive significance. It betrayed purposes and plans not yet, perhaps, clearly defined, but already conceived in his mind. A little farther on, he added, as if to flatter the French public by letting it into the secret of his prudential measures towards the Church,—'This respect shown to the altar marks a memorable epoch, which will make an impression upon the Italian nations, and will gain

friends to the Republic.' Joy was everywhere at its height. 'If this be the way,' said the Italians, 'we are all republicans, and ready to arm for the defence of a people whose manners, customs, and language are most like our own.'

This mode of speech, replete with double meaning, strongly resembled that which he had used to his soldiers on their landing in Egypt. But those whom he thus made a show of associating in his policy by this sort of half-confidence, and who applauded it with a deep disdain for the intellectual and moral inferiority of these disinherited peoples, had no suspicion of the yet larger concessions which he was on the eve of making in France to superstitions which had no hold upon them. The Cardinal Chiaramonti, well known for his conciliatory and pacific homily published at Imola, shortly after the treaty of Campo-Formio, had just been elected Pope at Venice, under the name of Pius VII., and Bonaparte was already dazzling him with seductive promises, by negotiating privately with him the conclusion for a Concordat between France and Rome.

During this time the army of the Rhine was casting off its enforced inaction. Once assured that the army of reserve had safely entered Italy, Moreau, who had been so long fettered before Ulm, was able to resume operations with his troops, though these were diminished by nearly one-fourth of their effective force through the departure of Moncey's corps. They had been still further weakened subsequently by the loss of a considerable portion of Sainte Suzanne's corps, which were detached to oppose free German bands on the Rhine. So soon as he was free to act, three days sufficed for Moreau to overthrow that intrenched camp before which he had so long remained in deliberate inaction, giving rise by his conduct to so many absurd insinuations. Abandoning his first idea of marching upon Augsburg and Munich,—a plan which might have been effectual, but which had the disadvantage of leaving an open line of communication for Kray, by the right bank of the Danube, —Moreau replied to his detractors by a far bolder and grander operation. He crossed that river above Ulm at Bleindheim, not far from Donauwerth, where the Austrians

had their magazines. M. de Kray seeing the importance of this manœuvre, which would give us a position in his rear, and seriously imperil his line of retreat, vainly strove to oppose our passage of the Danube, in a series of petty combats, which almost all ended to his disadvantage. He was still less successful in the attempt which he made with the bulk of his forces to drive us back upon the right bank. The encounter between the two armies took place in the plain of Hochstett, a locality already memorable in our history for a defeat, of very disastrous consequences to us as a nation. The Austrian cavalry, until now so confident in its superiority, was overthrown by our horse, after a brilliant resistance; but, in spite of this reverse, the Austrians still maintained their positions with desperate determination, and succours arrived in every direction. At length, however, they were compelled to yield. Night having come, a general charge of the French troops forced the hostile line to give way at every point, and the Austrians retreated, leaving in our hands 5000 prisoners, 20 cannon, 1200 horses, and immense magazines. Thus was effaced the blot left on our military honour (19th of June 1800). M. de Kray retired precipitately on Nordlingen, abandoning his position at Ulm, and favoured in his retreat by such terrible weather that the state of the roads rendered pursuit almost impossible. Moreau, satisfied with having driven the enemy back in the direction of Bohemia, whither he had no interest in following him, retired upon the Danube, and then upon Munich, which he occupied on the 28th of June. He had already known for several days of the victory of Marengo, and of the armistice which had ensued. Having reached the Isar, and deeming that his position was rather advanced, in consideration of the position of the principal army corps, and of the succours which Austria might clandestinely draw from Italy, he granted his adversary a suspension of arms, which guaranteed to us provisionally all the ground of which, up to this time, we had made ourselves masters in Germany.

Bonaparte had started again for Paris, leaving the command of the army in Italy to Masséna. Far from

deeming at that time that he had any ground of complaint against the illustrious defender of Genoa, he had loaded him with praises and assurances of gratitude.[1] If the Italian patriots had cherished for a moment the hope of seeing the independence of their country restored, they soon had any such illusion dispelled by reading the decree in which Bonaparte bade farewell to the Cisalpine Republic. 'Considering that this republic had been recognised as free and independent by the majority of the powers of Europe,' he decreed the assembly of a council of 50 members for the purpose of re-organising the institutions of the republic, that is to say, of bringing them into harmony with the consular rule, under the presidency of a French minister-extraordinary. A commission named by him was provisionally charged with the government. In relation to Piedmont, he scarcely tried to veil his intention of making it purely and simply a department of France. The administration of its affairs was placed in the hands of General Jourdan.

The First Consul returned to France with a will more absolute than ever, a soul more impatient and disordered by power than ever, affecting to reject as beneath him all the adulations which men were ready to pay. 'I have too good an opinion of myself,' he wrote to Lucien, 'to attach any value to such gewgaws' (June 29, 1880). It soon became evident, however, that there was little sincerity in this show of scorn for the old array of triumphal demonstration. He came back with his mind full of projects which he had not hitherto dared to develop, and he had now in his hand the force necessary for their realisation. The battle of Marengo, for all its surprising results, had been gained at too great a distance from Vienna to insure peace; but it gave to the conqueror an unrivalled preponderance in Europe and an overwhelming power in France. He was about to make use of this to advance one step farther in his favourite system, the only system ever fairly comprehended by his so prodigious and yet so narrow genius—despotism at home and conquest abroad. Never did fairer seeming cloak direr designs.

[1] Général Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna.*

CHAPTER II

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS MONARCHY—HELIOPOLIS, HOHENLINDEN, AND LUNEVILLE

WHILE Bonaparte was playing this dangerous game in Piedmont, his adversaries in Paris, struck with the risk he was running, awaited the issue with mingled anxiety and hope. Unable to attempt any plot against him at such a time, they made up for long restraint by the boldness of their wishes and their dreams, the only liberty which was left them. With so adventurous a spirit, stability seemed impossible; it was necessary to be prepared for any contingency; and as there was a strong disposition to apprehend the worst, they speculated freely on the chances of war. Some went so far as to desire the death of the First Consul, even at the expense of a disaster; but the greater number confined themselves to considering the best course to pursue if he were killed. The obscurity in which the framers of the Constitution of the Year VIII had intentionally left that part of it which referred to the mode of replacing the head of the State justified these anxieties, and if it was wrong to wish for an accident at such a cost, it was at any rate an urgent duty to be prepared for it.

At the time of his departure for Italy, the First Consul alluded in private conversation, readily and with feigned indifference, to the possibility of his death: he tried to ascertain what impression it made on his interlocutors, so as to penetrate their most hidden thoughts; but he could not bear another person to discuss the subject, for the mere supposition seemed to betoken in one who expressed it a disbelief in the kind of supernatural mission which he

wished the public to attribute to him. With the expressions, 'his fortune, his destiny, his star,' always on his lips, to admit the possibility of his sudden death irritated him beyond measure; it appeared like a contradiction of the superstition which he hoped to make popular. This oriental pretension was displayed in a rather singular manner at the time of the negotiations with England. Lord Grenville having alleged among other reasons for continuing the war, 'that it was impossible to treat with a country where everything depended on the life of a single man;' the *Moniteur* replied in rather novel language for a century so essentially rationalistic: '*As for the life and death of Bonaparte, my Lord, such things are above your ken.*'

It was already almost sedition in his eyes to regard him as mortal. He had, however, so little succeeded in inculcating this mysticism even in those who were most warmly attached to him, that his own brothers were the first to discuss the irreverent supposition, and to wonder what would be their fate in case it were realised. Joseph and Lucien broached the question plainly with their confidants; they even went much farther, for they debated in what measure they would be able to share power with the successors of the First Consul.[1] It was not surprising, then, that men who were bound to him by no ties, and who had no motive for shrinking from such surmises, should indulge in the same conjectures. In a country possessing firm institutions citizens know nothing of this anxiety, law is supreme and they abide by its decisions; but in a state where one man is everything the maintenance of public order depends on the slender thread of human life, and the moment this man is in danger his succession is open to all competitors. Despots always marvel at the brutality with which the hour of their death is anticipated; it is because, from the instant there is reason to fear that their life may be cut short, they fail the compact to which they had sworn, and the security which they promised exists no longer.

When Bonaparte on his return to Paris spoke of ingrati-

[1] See, among others, upon this point, the *Mémoires de Miot*, Joseph's confidant, those of Rœderer, and the *Journal de Stanislas Girardin.*

tude and conspiracy, on learning that during his absence Moreau, Carnot, Lafayette, Bernadotte, and his own brothers, had each in turn been designated as his successor, he was simply condemning the hopeless *régime* which he had given to France. If, in fact, some under the sway of hostile feeling had eagerly foreseen a catastrophe because they desired it, the greater number had only been influenced by strong apprehensions and a very justifiable anxiety for self-preservation.

These clandestine consultations were held, for the most part, by his own partisans, men whose chief care was to maintain things as they were; and among the most sagacious were the members of that Commission of Inspectors which had so powerfully contributed to the success of the 18th Brumaire. Moreover, not one of those whose names had thus been put forward by public alarm had for an instant thought of taking advantage of this unexpected candidature. Moreau was fighting in the heart of Germany. Lafayette had only just returned to France, full of gratitude to his liberator; he was living in retirement at Lagrange, and always spoke of the First Consul in terms of admiration. Bernadotte was confined in the Departments of the West, where, since the pacification of La Vendée, he had merely an administrative office. As for Carnot, the minister of war, he conscientiously devoted himself to the duties of his office. Compromised with the party who had made the revolution of Fructidor, distrusted by those who had made that of Brumaire, he had nothing to do with the speculations with which his name was associated among the men who wanted a Republic without a Dictator. But Bonaparte never forgave any of those who had been the innocent object of these hopes, and Carnot soon paid for it by the loss of his office. He would not allow any one, even in thought, to fill up that gap which he had purposely left in the Constitution of the Year VIII; it suited his plans that chaos should be the only prospect after him, so that he might be hailed again as a saviour, when he should fill up the blank by proclaiming hereditary right.

These eventual combinations, resulting from the spon-

taneous expression of public anxiety, secretly encouraged by Fouché, minister of police, who was quite ready in any case to take advantage of them by supporting them if they succeeded, and denouncing them if they failed, seemed for an instant likely to triumph, when the news of Bonaparte's defeat at Marengo was brought to Paris by merchants' couriers. The cause of France had already suffered so greatly from being confounded with the fortunes of a single man, that the impression produced by these tidings was by no means one of national sorrow. What appeared to be a disaster for the country itself was regarded merely as the defeat of a party ; and each rejoiced or sorrowed according to his interests or sympathies, just as the public had done in the various *Days* of the Revolution. Patriotism itself had fallen into decay, from the time when Bonaparte had so constantly identified his own person with the cause and image of the country. These illusions only lasted for an evening, and faded away with the shades of night. The next day, the whole truth was known : it was then found that the same day had seen two battles, of which the second had more than repaired the faults and misfortunes of the first. A short time later, the conqueror returned to affirm a victory which he knew he had gained in Paris as well as at Marengo. He arrived unexpectedly, declaring that he would have neither ceremonies nor triumphal arches, and showing for such demonstrations an aversion and disdain which probably arose from the fact that these marks of honour were not yet sufficiently brilliant to please him, for his feelings in that respect changed too quickly to admit of belief in their sincerity. He did not, however, show the same dislike to ceremonies which testified to his power, while at the same time they strengthened it.

The fulsome flattery with which the public authorities greeted him proved clearly enough that France had not submitted to six months of absolute power with impunity. His friends and his foes seemed alike to strive to redeem by the abjectness of their adulation the crime of premature foresight or disappointed hope. The Tribunate alone endeavoured to moderate these bombastic glorifications, by

associating with the eulogy of the First Consul that of Desaix, who had contributed so much to assure the victory. The members dared to speak of the triumphs of the army of the Rhine, as well as those of the army of Italy. They purposely gave great *éclat* to the funeral oration of Desaix, which was delivered by Daunou and several other orators. Daunou took advantage of the occasion to rejoice over the guarantees which the victory of Marengo had secured to liberty; for, said he, the Government would henceforward be too strong to fear liberty. This was a dutiful belief which he could not long preserve. Benjamin Constant expressed the same hope, particularly with regard to the liberty of the press; he applauded the deliverance of the Italian patriots. Some days after, on the anniversary of the 14th of July, the Tribunate again plainly showed their sentiments by the solemnity which characterised the funeral oration of La Tour d'Auvergne, a man still more remarkable for his abnegation and civic virtues than for his military heroism.

This time they openly ventured to associate the glory of Moreau with the homage rendered to the memory of the hero who had been his friend. With La Tour d'Auvergne disappeared a type which this generation was never to see again. The speakers naturally dwelt upon the modesty, disinterestedness, and simple grandeur of that antique character; but it was not easy to extol these republican virtues without being suspected of disparaging those who prided themselves so little on their attainment. Whatever may have been their intention on this point, they were equally to be pitied for having to express their censure in so evasive a manner, or else for being unable any longer to praise even the dead without risk of offending the living.

The First Consul had returned with thoughts of a very different kind from the wishes of the Tribunate. Before his departure, he had on different occasions given signs of his pretensions, and his success was not likely to diminish them. Public opinion was, however, scarcely prepared to admit the claims which were now settled upon in his mind. Who could suspect, in seeing him satiated with glory and

power, the sovereign master of a great country, that these favours of fortune had only stimulated his ambition? Even his enemies thought him appeased, satisfied with his dictatorship, and more careful of the real prerogatives of authority than of the external forms which are its sanction in the eyes of the vulgar. In this they gave him credit for greater nobility of mind than he really possessed. The simple and popular forms of the Consular magistracy no longer sufficed; he wished to substitute not only hereditary right for election, but all the parade of monarchical pomp for the austere simplicity of a government still republican in appearance. The public had not the slightest suspicion of this secret thought; he had to reveal it by degrees, to approach the end step by step, and insensibly to prepare the public mind to offer him what he was burning to take.

The household of the First Consul was already beginning to resemble that of a court. Ladies-in-waiting, a master of the ceremonies, the etiquette and fashions revived from the ancient *régime*, were about to reappear. Chamberlains, under the title of prefects of the palace, would soon replace the aides-de-camp. He required for his villegiature an ancient royal residence in the place of Malmaison. When he was offered the palace of Saint Cloud, he refused it, but soon after made it his abode. This was to prove that he could take possession of it, if such was his decision. The returned emigrants, delighted at a revival of customs which were dear to them, thronged his salons and ante-chamber in expectation of the day when a change of name only would restore the ancient monarchy. So they had only to follow their inclinations to gratify the taste of the master, who flattered himself that by dint of habit they would look upon him as the natural successor of kings by the grace of God. He did not suspect that this etiquette only pleased them because in thought they saw their legitimate sovereign in his place. He never understood how much this pomp and false grandeur, indispensable to a king who derives his rights from his birth, lowers the man who has risen by his own merit, and who can be great in himself and his own capacities. He had a great liking for all those external

marks of respect and devotion which compose the code of the courtier, and of which kings who think are so seldom the dupes. Men who had belonged to the ancient court pleased him especially, because they possessed more than any others this ritual of hypocrisy and servility. 'It is only men of this class,' he used to say, 'who know how to serve.' After his return from Italy, his infatuation for them knew no bounds, and the number of names which he frequently struck off the list of emigrants caused so much uneasiness to the purchasers of national property that he was obliged to give them repeated assurances of the security of their tenure. In this, at any rate, the ambition of the First Consul dictated a generous policy, which cannot be too highly praised. All collective proscriptions, all those of women, children, and cultivators of the soil, thus disappeared from this fatal list. He took especial pains to erase the names of all ecclesiastics, whom he already regarded as his future instruments. He wished the law to be applied only to those emigrants *who had borne arms*, and even if those who had borne arms bore also a great name, he was perfectly willing to make the first advances to them, in hopes of gaining their support. It was under the influence of these feelings that he once expressed his indignation at finding a Richelieu obliged to live away from his country, and ordered Fouché to inform him that in France he would be treated with the deference due to his illustrious name. But the duke of Richelieu did not understand the tacit conditions under which this favour was granted, and soon after learned to his cost that the liberty which had been so generously proffered did not go so far as to allow him to applaud the innocent allusions in *Edouard en Ecosse*.

His flattery of the clergy sprang from the same motive; he determined to have the priests for his auxiliaries at any price, and this desire, conceived with the violence which characterised his passions, often led him into exaggerations and feints which exceeded the limits of human stupidity. When the prefect of La Vendée was about to send some delegates of his department to Paris, Bonaparte wrote to him: 'If there are any priests, give them the preference;

I like and esteem priests who are good patriots, and know how to defend the country against the eternal enemies of France, *the wicked heretics* of England' (July 26, 1800). Here the intention was too flagrant, and such gross flattery would have sufficed to enable perspicacious spirits to see through the man, who about the same time exclaimed in a Council of State, 'With my prefects, my gendarmes, and my priests, I can do anything I like!' Besides, he no longer made any secret of his views with regard to the clergy, and openly announced the speedy reconciliation of France with Rome. He had in fact held several consultations about the Concordat; but in negotiating this interested transaction, he flattered himself that he could deceive all parties with regard to his aim. To the friends of Catholicism he represented it as a return to religious ideas, a restoration of true principles; to the friends of liberty he spoke of it as a definite victory of philosophy, the submission of the Church to the State: 'It is to religion what vaccination is to the smallpox,' he said to Cabanis; 'in fifty years there will be no religion left in France.' And to Lafayette, 'I will lower the priests still more than you did; a bishop shall deem it an honour to dine with a prefect. . . . Do you think it a small matter to have obliged the Pope and the clergy to declare against the legitimacy of the Bourbons?' To which the friend of Washington replied, with gentle irony, 'Come, general, acknowledge that your only object is to get the little phial broken over your head.'[1]

Probably Lafayette scarcely thought he was so near the truth. However that may be, this project of usurpation, with or without sacerdotal consecration, was in reality the object of all Bonaparte's acts as well as of his thoughts. It would certainly be a mistake to imagine that he had at this period any thoroughly settled plan; the ways and means would depend on circumstances, but the object was fixed, and he was advancing towards it with rapid strides. He took every opportunity of reviving monarchy in manners, customs, and ideas, just as he had already partly re-established it in public institutions. When he had to celebrate

[1] Lafayette: *Mes Rapports avec le Premier Consul.*

the anniversary of the foundation of the Republic, he took good care to intercalate a ceremony in honour of Turenne, the favourite hero of the great monarchical century. He contrived to oblige republican ministers to pronounce the eulogy of the general of Louis XIV., in order to divert men's thoughts from the Roman and Spartan type which revolutionary enthusiasm had consecrated, and to fix them on the new virtues which he wished to bring into fashion. Fully aware of the influence of phraseology on French imagination, he at first changed words in order to change things more surely. The words 'country' and 'liberty,' hitherto so constantly employed, gradually disappeared from official manifestoes, and gave place to those of 'fidelity,' 'glory,' and 'honour.' Honour, Montesquieu says, is the strength of monarchies. Nothing can be more true, if we understand honour, not in the delicate and susceptible sense of moralists, as the safeguard of dignity and integrity, but a kind of desire to be distinguished and to rise from obscurity, which is perfectly compatible with many vanities and weaknesses.

This is the kind of honour which monarchies understand and encourage, and from which also they derive profit. Bonaparte instinctively followed their example, in trying to revive a noble principle in the lowest shape which it can possibly assume. He took care not to neglect a means at once so powerful and, unfortunately, so easy to distort and to make use of. The word appeared in almost every line of his proclamations. It was to explain his own meaning of the word 'honour,' and at the same time to excite emulation by a more direct and urgent appeal, that he gradually developed his institution of *armes d'honneur*, first sketch of the Legion of Honour, which was about to extend to offices of every kind rewards that were at first bestowed exclusively on the army. A decree of August 15 ordered a distribution, not only of swords of honour, but guns, muskets, trumpets, and even wands of honour! The names of those to whom they were awarded were to be inscribed on tablets of marble in the Temple of Mars.

Thus honour was henceforth to be synonymous with

faithful service. The First Consul was not only the source of all advancement, he became the sole remunerator, the master of reputation, the sovereign distributor of glory. A frightful power for a man to possess among a people so incurably vain that their very passion for equality has most often only been a disguised form of vanity. And all the great springs of so many heroic actions—patriotism, love of liberty, faith in the Revolution—were about to be gradually absorbed in one single anxiety: the desire to attract the attention of the man who possessed the singular privilege of assigning to each one his share of honour and consideration.

Bonaparte had no intention of limiting this prerogative, so extraordinary for a republican magistrate, to the right of decreeing rewards or of patenting merit in the interest of the Government. He wished to exercise it without control, and to assume the power of dispensing disgrace as well as glory. He branded with infamy, by a public declaration, General Latour Foissac, who might have acted wrongly or rightly in capitulating at Mantua, but who, at any rate, was answerable to law, and not to a jurisdiction of oriental despotism.[1]

The aim of all these acts and tendencies was clear enough even to foreigners; it was the re-establishment of royalty. Bonaparte was so evidently working at the reconstruction of a monarchy, he was gathering together with so much care all its elements, both new and old, that the count of Provence, who was by no means remarkable for candour, had the simplicity to believe that these efforts were made for the benefit of the Bourbons, and wrote him two well-known letters to ask for his throne. He was not long, however, in discovering the real intentions of the late pensionary of the king in the school of Brienne.

About this time an anonymous pamphlet appeared, in which the author endeavoured to warn and stir up opinion, that was too sluggish in favouring designs in which they hoped to make it an accomplice. It attracted the more attention, that since the 18th Brumaire the political press had ceased to exist. This pamphlet could then only have

[1] Bonaparte to Carnot. July 24, 1800.

been published by special favour, which was tantamount to the approval of the Government. It was very soon known, in fact, that not only had it received the sanction of the authorities, but was written at their suggestion. It was issued from the Home Office; the author was M. de Fontanes, who had written it at the instigation of Lucien. Lucien had not published it till he had submitted it to the approbation of the First Consul. He had a copy sent to every public functionary.[1] It was a parallel between Cæsar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte; its historical value was very small, its only importance being derived from the views which it announced for the future. Bonaparte had solemnly repudiated this comparison only a few months before, in the famous sitting of the Ancients at Saint Cloud, as a calumny invented by the perfidy of his enemies; he had appealed to heaven to witness to the purity of his intentions. Calling upon his head the vengeance of patriots and the curse of posterity if he should ever justify so insulting a comparison, 'I am overwhelmed with calumny,' he exclaimed, 'in return for my pure and disinterested intentions. *They talk of a Cæsar, a Cromwell! They dare to attribute to me the project of a military government!*' Now that he could at last throw off the mask, he boasted of an intention which he had then rejected as an insult. He would not confine himself to equalling his two models, he would surpass them by giving to his work a solidity never acquired by theirs.

This indispensable supplement which they had found it impossible to realise, and which he was about to secure to French institutions, was hereditary right. This one idea ran through every page of the pamphlet; it was the only one, too, which arrested public attention. The secondary considerations were not less characteristic. The comparison to Cromwell, according to Fontanes, could only satisfy superficial minds. In reality, Cromwell was nothing but a scoundrel, fit at the most 'to serve as a model to the brutal Robespierre and the base-hearted Orleans.' They talk, too, of Monk; but 'is it to be supposed that a marshal's

[1] *Mémoires de Rœderer.*

staff or a constable's sword would suffice for the man *before whom the universe stands aghast?*' Bonaparte had only two equals—Alexander and Cæsar; even Cæsar had been too often *a chief of demagogues.* 'Happy the Republic,' he added, 'if Bonaparte were immortal! . . . but *where are his heirs?* . . . where is the successor of Pericles? . . . Frenchmen, at any moment you may again fall under the domination of Assemblies, under the yoke of the S. . . ., or that of the Bourbons. . . . You sleep on the brink of an abyss, and your sleep is tranquil, insensate as you are!'

This revelation, so unexpected and so clear, caused profound disappointment. The good citizens still believed in the hero of modesty and simplicity, whom official flattery had celebrated on his return from Marengo. They were astonished and irritated at the inordinate cravings of a man already gorged with honour and power. Could it be the same man who, less than a year before, had only asked for *three months' dictatorship to save the Republic?* The authority of a Cæsar now appeared to him a useless toy if it were not crowned with hereditary right! What would he require later, and how would they ever satisfy so insatiable an ambition? The royalists, who had been willing enough to aid in the reconstruction of a monarchy, provided, however, that the throne of the monarch should remain vacant and reserved, were beginning to plot in their secret meetings. The republicans gave more open vent to their anger and indignation; since some dared to speak of Cæsar, they would also dare to speak of Brutus. All this discontent, however, evaporated in words, and the conspiracy of Ceracchi, Arena, and Topino Lebrun, which is contemporary with Fontanes' lucubration (end of October 1800), was a sort of school-plot, a plan of a tragedy, engendered by declamatory imaginations: in spite of all the provocations of the private police of the First Consul, it never had even the commencement of execution.

All parties, even the moderates who habitually approved of everything, regarded the publication as inopportune and premature. Some prefects, who were not in the secret, denounced it as seditious. Bonaparte, seeing it had thus

failed in its effect, resolved to disavow it. He violently reprimanded Fouché, and overwhelmed him with reproaches for the publication of the unfortunate pamphlet. Fouché, who was aware of the part the First Consul had had in Fontanes' publication, and who, it is asserted, had seen the manuscript with Bonaparte's corrections, accepted with a good grace his part in the comedy; he received the storm with perfect coolness, and only replied by throwing the responsibility of the affair on Lucien. 'The fool,' exclaimed Bonaparte, 'will not be satisfied till he has compromised me.' This was Lucien's sole funeral oration. Since he could not accuse his own brother, and as some one must be guilty, Lucien was sacrificed, and left the Home Office to take the embassy of Spain. 'Lucien,' wrote Rœderer in his journal, 'asserts that he has taken with him the original copy of the pamphlet, with four corrections in the First Consul's own handwriting; *and I believe him.*' This evidence is confirmed by Stanislas Girardin, and by all the memoirs of the time. Lucien started for Madrid, but had a very violent quarrel with his brother before his departure. It was thus that this ambitious and mistaken man entered upon that singular course of opposition, to which he afterwards owed a popularity that plainly showed how strongly the public felt the need of some one to express their feelings of discontent, and how much they were embarrassed in the choice of their heroes. No one was ever more relentless towards the press than Lucien during his short ministry, and none took more cynical advantage of the facility which his position afforded him of increasing his private fortune.

One of the most curious parts in Fontanes' pamphlet was the singular abbreviation about 'the yoke of the S. . . .' This initial meant *Sieyès*, but in the second edition it was interpreted by the word *soldiers*. Ever since his thoughts had turned on hereditary right, the First Consul lost no opportunity of declaiming against the military spirit. This last subject had become one of his favourite themes. It is worthy of remark, that Bonaparte, who owed his rise to the army, was the first to disown an origin, of whose insufficiency for the foundation of a stable government he

was aware. And though he was incapable of changing his instincts, though he was the representative of militarism, he never failed to repeat on every occasion that his functions were purely civil and would always remain so. As Moreau, Carnot, and Bernadotte, the only rivals whom he feared, were in the army, and as no man had acquired sufficient glory in civil service to give him umbrage, he was constantly heard to exclaim that 'it would be a fearful misfortune for France if a soldier should be his successor!' This criticism of a spirit of which he was the creature and personification might have produced illusions had it come from any other lips, but from Bonaparte it appeared like ingratitude towards an instrument which he thought he no longer needed, and the public only saw in it his desire to give to his authority a wider basis and a less ephemeral character. However this may be, the *élite* of the army, who were still jealous for the public zeal, felt the insult deeply. Moreau, who happened to be passing through Paris at the time, did not hesitate to complain to the First Consul in the name of his comrades, not, as has been foolishly alleged, for the sake of ruining the author of the pamphlet, but because he knew it to have been inspired by the chief of the State himself, and his representations on this subject contributed in some part to the removal of Lucien.

In spite of the bad effect produced by Fontanes' pamphlet, this attempt to sound the disposition of the public was not completely unsuccessful. It gave the cue to that multitude of complaisant and assiduous individuals, whose principal occupation consists in trying to ascertain the wishes of their master in order to anticipate them. Whenever the attempt should be renewed, the Government was sure to find in that element a numerous party to support it. But in order to lead this attempt to a successful issue, so that the seeds sown with so much care might develop and fructify, France must be brought to such a state of prosperity as would justify so high a reward; peace must be made with Europe. Hence the unwonted energy with which the First Consul, since his return from Marengo,

pushed on the conclusion of a definite arrangement with Austria and the chief continental powers.

Austria was much less inclined to treat than was expected. Her military situation was in fact by no means desperate, since Marengo had after all only replaced her army on that line of the Adige which she had so long defended against us. It was now that the fault committed by Bonaparte in persisting in directing the principal effort of the campaign in Italy, instead of Germany, began to be felt. The defeat of Marengo, although it created some depression at the court of Vienna, was so far from reducing it to a state of despondency, that the day following that on which the news arrived, viz. June 20th, Austria concluded with England a subsidy treaty, by which she engaged to reject a separate peace with France until the month of February 1801. This transaction could never have been even proposed if a French army had gained a victory in the heart of Germany. Hohenlinden was about to give irresistible proof of this assertion.

The court of Austria being thus bound to England, and knowing the firm determination of the English Cabinet not to treat, on account of the immense importance it attached to the evacuation of Egypt, was merely attempting to gain time. Our desire for peace made this task easy. General Comte de Saint-Julien came to Paris with a letter written by the Emperor in reply to that of the First Consul. Bonaparte asserts in his *Mémoires* that the Emperor said to him in this letter: '*You may credit everything which the Comte de Saint-Julien says to you; I will ratify whatever he does.*' This is only one of those numerous inventions in that romance of false grandeur which has so long deceived historians. Not only does the letter contain nothing of the kind, but it does not even give to the Comte de Saint-Julien a shadow of power or the appearance of an official character. It merely authorised him to sound the First Consul on the basis that France intended to propose for peace, observing how essential it was to ascertain this point '*before entering into public negotiations likely to excite prematurely in so many nations hopes that may prove illusory.*'

We do not find a single word in this letter, nor in that of M. de Thugut, which quickly followed it, to justify the interpretation which Bonaparte afterwards tried to give it.[1]

M. de Saint-Julien's mission, then, was entirely designed to temporise; but the negotiator, devoid of all diplomatic experience, and being all the easier to deal with from his apparent good faith, was induced by M. de Talleyrand to draw up and sign preliminary articles of peace. From this arose a twofold deception, one for the Emperor, who had sent to Paris a man entrusted with no powers whatever, and who, nevertheless, found himself compromised without having gained much time; the other for the First Consul, who, hoping that Austria would not dare to retract, and being dupe of his own avidity, had hastened to take advantage of the inexperience, either real or at least very well feigned, of the negotiator, to fetter the court of Vienna.

The conduct of M. de Saint-Julien was openly disavowed; the disavowal did not, however, lead to the immediate renewal of hostilities. Before negotiations with Austria could again be opened with better authorised plenipotentiaries, the French Cabinet made up for its late discomfiture by several diplomatic victories, some honourable to France, others scarcely creditable to the policy of a great country, in spite of all the skill displayed in these transactions by the First Consul. The United States, which for some time past had been in a state of almost open war with France, because they had abandoned the right of neutrals in order to escape the interference of England with their commerce, repented their desertion, on account of the violences of the English navy on neutral flags. Our Government took advantage of this state of feeling, and the treaty of Morfontaine sealed the reconciliation of the two peoples.

The principles of maritime neutrality, as they were recognised, especially since 1780, were nothing more than the protection of the weak against the strong. They

[1] The text may be found in *Histoire des Négociations rélatives au Traité de Lunéville*, par M. du Casse.

stipulated that neutral ships could carry the merchandise of any enemy, except contraband of war; that the right of search did not apply to vessels under convoy; that a blockade must be serious enough to prevent access to a port. These principles had been sanctioned by most of the powers of Europe, even by Russia; as for France, she had so often fought for them that they constituted a cause virtually French. England alone, influenced by passion and logic of war, had persisted in disregarding them under pretence that such a right would have deprived her of all means of restraint over her enemies. Under the impulse of these feelings she had committed such excesses against the commerce of the neutrals as had excited high discontent among most of the maritime nations of the continent. Bonaparte was not a man to overlook these expressions of anger. He eagerly seized the opportunity of seeming the champion of the weak against the strong. It is altogether impossible to regard this as a homage rendered to principles on the part of Bonaparte, when we remember the abuses a thousandfold more glaring of the continental blockade and so many other iniquitous enterprises; but it must be acknowledged that, in this circumstance, he adopted by calculation a policy of justice. When a government pursues equitable, generous, and moderate conduct, it would be going too far to inquire into its motives for the purpose of censuring it. Bonaparte was in this circumstance the defender of public right in Europe; he was a worthy representative of France. He saw at a glance the advantage he could gain over England from this accumulation of grievances, and not satisfied with giving by the treaty of Morfontaine with the United States his formal adhesion to the principles which she disputed, he endeavoured to resuscitate against her the ancient league of the neutral powers.

At the head of this maritime confederation, which Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and even Prussia, were longing to join, in order to avenge the insults of the right of search, he resolved to place Paul I., who, not less dissatisfied with England than with Austria, was already gained to the cause,

and considered himself its natural patron. But this still remote object was insignificant compared with one far weightier and more immediate, which the First Consul had kept in view ever since his elevation to the Consulate; namely, a close alliance with Russia. Here obstacles were innumerable. The ruling passion of the fantastic and brutal despot who governed this country was intense hatred of the French Revolution, and the end and aim of his politics was the reconstruction of monarchical and feudal Europe, as it had been before 1789. His anger towards Austria arose chiefly from the belief that she had betrayed the cause of this general restoration of the old *régime:* he could not pardon her for not having re-established the king of Piedmont, and the duke of Modena, and the aristocracy of Venice. The Mastership of the Knights of Malta, which he had gloried in accepting after the dispersion of the Order, was itself in his eyes a sort of symbol of this rehabilitation of old institutions. This fixed idea, which he pushed so far as to force his subjects throughout the extent of his empire to adopt the costumes which were in fashion before the Revolution, formed the whole system of his foreign policy. In every other respect, this formidable maniac combined the fickleness of a woman with the savage whims of an Asiatic king. Paul I. was, in fact, one of those strange and incomplete beings whom only the madness of omnipotence can breed. His infatuation for Bonaparte was no contradiction to his favourite chimera. He liked in him the man of the 18th Brumaire, the enemy of the Revolution, the destroyer of the Republic. His despotic instinct, more penetrating than that of many enlightened minds, enabled him to recognise in Bonaparte the future tyrant, the founder of the Czarism of the West.

Such was the singular ally that the First Consul had resolved to give to France, and whom he was endeavouring to captivate. It was to a people who had made the Revolution that he dared to propose the policy of pleasing and maintaining a sovereign who was on the eve of breaking with Austria because this power was not in his opinion sufficiently anti-revolutionary. To France was reserved the

task of cultivating a friendship which had wearied even the accomplices who had such powerful reasons for keeping it up, and which, formerly so much coveted, had become a laughing-stock and an object of contempt. However, the task of our diplomacy at the commencement of these negotiations was neither very difficult nor very dignified; it consisted chiefly in humouring the whims of a lunatic. Bonaparte, who was bent on creating an enemy to Austria, had little difficulty in charming the Czar. He sent him the sword which Leo X. had given to Lisle Adam, the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta; he offered him the island itself, which, after having been besieged for two years by the English, was on the point of falling into their hands; and, finally, he sent him back without ransom seven or eight thousand Russian prisoners, after having carefully clothed and equipped them, not without having assured himself, however, that neither England nor Austria would consent to exchange them for a like number of French prisoners. Paul showed sensibility after his fashion for this courteous behaviour; he consented to the renewal of direct communications between France and Russia, which for some time had only been carried on through the intermediation of Prussia; but in his intercourse with Bonaparte he displayed none of the sentimental admiration which is ascribed to him in the *Mémoires* of Napoleon. His first act, in return for such advances and for so much caressing, was to send M. de Serguisef to Paris with a note from Count Rostopchine, written in such an autocratic tone that it is difficult to understand how Bonaparte could endure it, notwithstanding his anxiety to win the favour of Paul I., or at any rate how it was that he did not hesitate before the exactions which it presaged for the future. He was treated very much like the governor of some distant province of the Russian empire. This circumstance has been misrepresented in the *Mémoires* of Napoleon, with almost incredible cynicism: 'Paul,' he says, 'sent to the First Consul a courier with a letter in which he said, "*Citizen First Consul, I do not write to enter into a discussion with you on the rights of man, or of the citizen; each*

country has the form of government which it thinks best. Whenever I see at the head of a country a man who knows how to govern and how to fight, my heart sympathises with him."' It is seldom that historical truth has been misrepresented to such an extent, or the credulity of the reader more abused. It is useless to say that the note of Count Rostopchine, which was not accompanied by any letter, in no way resembles this flattering composition. It is dry and imperious to the verge of insolence.

The conditions which the count signified to the Consular Government in this kind of ukase (dated September 26, 1800) were not the wishes but the will of the 'Emperor, his master,' and the concessions, without *which a good understanding could not be re-established.* These conditions were, the restitution of Malta, the restoration of the king of Sardinia, the guarantee of the integrity of the States of the kings of Naples and Bavaria, and of the elector of Wurtemburg. The First Consul promised everything demanded, but he did so with the full intention of evading his promise sooner or later, at least as far as Piedmont was concerned. His object for the present was to satisfy his imperious ally at any price; but this cordial understanding, of which he boasted so much, rested upon nothing but a falsehood; and the more his present complaisance was unbounded, the more violent would be the irritation of the Czar when he should find out how much he had been duped. This much-boasted diplomatic manœuvre was then in reality a very hazardous scheme, which could be of no use but as a provisional expedient. In exchange for a temporary advantage, it prepared for us grave danger for the future. The alliance could not be lasting, unless the France of 1789 disavowed her principles. It was based neither on community of sympathy nor identity of principles and interests, but on a surprise, on the ephemeral whim of a madman. It was anti-European; it coupled civilisation with barbarism by establishing entire union between France and the monstrous system of the czars; it sacrificed national dignity to the personal convenience of the First Consul. Lastly, we became moral accomplices in the division of

Poland, and we were forced to betray the cause of the heroic soldiers who had previously shed their purest blood for us. We could not seriously join Russia without pledging ourselves against the people who represented against her the cause of Western civilisation, and Bonaparte showed no reluctance to accept this sad consequence of his diplomatic masterpiece.

The 21st of December 1800 he wrote to Paul a most flattering letter, pressing him to realise promptly 'the union of the two most powerful nations in the world.' 'He founded this hope,' he said, 'upon the grandeur and the loyalty of his character,' and a few days later, the 27th of December, he wrote to Fouché ordering the immediate seizure and suppression of all the copies of a pamphlet entitled: *No solid and lasting peace without the restoration of Poland: by the Polish citizen, Charles Moller.* Thus, the French Government was, from the outset of this alliance, induced to become the instrument of the Russian police against proscribed patriots. Such a result is the condemnation of the policy.

The First Consul had among the sovereigns of Europe another admirer, much more sincere and certainly much more inoffensive, in the king of Spain, Charles IV., a good-natured simpleton, entirely guided by the Prince of the Peace, the avowed lover of the queen, and who little thought at that time what his admiration would cost him later. Bonaparte determined to take advantage of his leanings to gain a second diplomatic victory. After having acquired the support of the favourite by rich presents, he tried to obtain from Charles IV. a retrocession of Louisiana, an old French province, which Louis XV. had abandoned to Spain. The aim was in itself legitimate and praiseworthy; the first duty of a Government jealous of the greatness of France was to get back colonies which were indispensable to the prosperity of her commerce. But the means employed were less honourable. They consisted in offering Tuscany, with the title of king, to the Duke of Parma, who had married an Infanta of Spain. This transaction was the more unjustifiable, because the First Consul

had no right whatever over the country in which he trafficked so unscrupulously, not even that of conquest. With regard to the title of king, so strangely created on this occasion by the so-called first magistrate of a republic, Bonaparte intended to give one of those ambiguous explanations which were always sure to be accepted, because he addressed himself to people who were only too glad to be deceived. The king of Spain, delighted at this good fortune, of which he did not foresee all the consequences, engaged to use all his influence with Portugal, in order to induce that country to shut her ports to the English.

The negotiations with Austria had not been abandoned, in spite of the irritation which the disavowal of M. de Saint-Julien's conduct excited in the First Consul; but the court of Vienna, compelled at last to assume a frank attitude, now insisted on the conditions of peace being discussed in a congress to which England should be admitted. Her engagements, in fact, prevented any other line of conduct. The First Consul, who had learned by this time the existence of the subsidy treaty, consented to this admission in spite of his repugnance; but on the singular and novel condition that England would accord him a *naval* armistice. Notwithstanding the strangeness of this request, the English Cabinet would have granted it if it had not concealed another object, as both parties knew without having recourse to direct explanation. Between England and ourselves there was something more than the resentment created by the war, something more than the daily insults of the bulletins or the *Moniteur;* there was Egypt. To all the evils caused by this fatal expedition was now added the impossibility of peace. There was no possible truce between England and ourselves, so long as this threat should remain suspended over her head; and since the events which had so clearly proved the exhaustion of our forces in the country, she had been less disposed than ever to allow us to establish ourselves in it. It is time rapidly to survey these events.

The occupation of Egypt was the favourite chimera of Bonaparte; it was his own work; of all his enterprises it was the one in which his heart was most engaged, and upon

which he had built most of those gigantic dreams which were at once an imperious need of his nature and the incurable infirmity of his genius. The more time and the force of events had shown the failure of this abortive enterprise, the more obstinately he denied it. His first care, on seizing the reins of government, had been to send promise after promise to the companions in arms whom he had abandoned; not only was it out of his power to fulfil such engagements, but even the letters in which he wrote them never reached their destination. The sole news which Kléber had received from Europe, during the five months after the desertion of the General-in-Chief, referred to the reverses which we had experienced in Italy, in Germany, and in Holland, before the battle of Zurich. The army had founded some hope of help upon the union at Toulon of the French and Spanish fleets; they learnt shortly afterwards that these fleets had passed back through the Straits to re-enter Brest. This retreat plainly showed the powerlessness of our navy. It was in fact so inefficient, notwithstanding all that Napoleon afterwards wrote about what our navy might and ought to have done if Ganteaume had wished or known how to act, that an expedition organised at a great expense and in the most profound secrecy, under the superior direction of Salicetti, to seize the island of Sardinia, which was at our very doors as it were, shamefully failed at the beginning of the Consulate. It was therefore utterly out of our power to send succour, and succour which, to be of any use at all, needed to be permanent, to distant coasts which English vigilance had so much interest in depriving of all communication with our vessels. Besides, facts here are more eloquent than the miserable quibbles with which the principal author of the misfortunes of the expedition tried to escape from the responsibility of his faults, by throwing them on those who were endeavouring to repair them. During the two years which elapsed after his departure from Egypt till the final capitulation, Bonaparte was absolute master of France; he held all our resources in his hands. What real assistance did he send to Egypt, after repeated attempts? A ridiculous reinforce-

ment of some few hundreds of men. He cannot, therefore, justify himself by accusing Ganteaume, as he had previously accused Brueys, for if the admiral committed all the faults so unjustly imputed to him, why did not Bonaparte remove him from his post?

The strong common sense of Kléber had long foreseen and judged the inevitable issue of the affair. After the destruction of our navy at Aboukir, he ceased to believe in the possibility of holding Egypt. Every subsequent event, the insurrection of Cairo, that conclusive proof of the mortal hatred of the population, and the incompatibility of the two civilisations, the failure of the expedition to Syria, which exposed us to constant invasions of the Turks, the increasing importance which England attached to the destruction of our settlement, the great unpopularity, very well known in Egypt, of an expedition which had become in France the text of accusations against the Directory, because public opinion persisted in attributing it to these men; lastly, the increasing exhaustion of our forces, which was not recruited by reinforcements, whilst those of the enemy followed an inverse progression,—all these facts had more and more confirmed his opinion. This was not the effect of either discouragement or weakness; it was the keen sight of strong reason and a right judgment. The indignation which the desertion of Bonaparte produced in the army, the patriotic uneasiness excited by the announcement of victories gained by the Coalition, the reappearance of the plague, which was already killing many men every week, the dislike felt by our soldiers to this land of exile, dislike manifested by frequent suicides and by partial revolts at Rosetta, at Alexandria, at El Arisch, the formation of a fresh Turkish army, which already numbered 60,000 men, massed in the neighbourhood of Jaffa; but stronger than all these motives, the desire to rush to the aid of the Republic, and preserve for France in peril the remnant of this once brilliant army, determined Kléber to reopen the negotiations which Bonaparte himself had begun with the Grand Vizier for the evacuation of Egypt.

Such was the well-grounded determination for which

this pure and noble man has been so unjustly reproached. It is thought natural and justifiable that Bonaparte, carried away by ambition, should have abandoned his companions in arms and deserted the enterprise which he alone had undertaken, and it is regarded as a crime in Kléber to have yielded to the perplexities of the most disinterested patriotism, after five months of desertion, uncertainty, and trials of every kind; he is accused for having yielded, not by deserting in his turn his companions, as he might have felt justified in doing, but by endeavouring to save them from the fate which awaited them. Bonaparte, it is true, had only given him instructions to treat in case he should lose 1500 men by the plague; but he had also promised him reinforcements, and these reinforcements never came. Besides, what right had he to prescribe a law which he had never respected himself? Kléber was no longer responsible to General Bonaparte; he was only responsible to France.

The letter in which Kléber explained the reasons that had induced him to take this determination is dated 10th Pluviose (January 30th, 1800). It was again addressed to the Directory. He estimated his army in it at 15,000 *effective combatants;* this, of course, was not the total number, since it did not include the administrators, the clerks, the sick, the sailors, the unhorsed cavalry, nor, in fact, any of the numerous functionaries employed in the work of colonisation. It was, however, this number which furnished Napoleon with a text for his bitter recriminations; upon this equivocation, and upon a few facts devoid of proof, he has founded the accusations, part of which he himself refutes in his Correspondence,[1] though they have been servilely quoted by several historians. According to these ingenious narrators and to himself also, not only Kléber told a falsehood, but the whole army—whose correspondence was intercepted, together with his own, and contains the same statements—had agreed to support his false assertions. He had himself spread disaffection among the soldiers, fomented revolts, encouraged suicides. If we did not know to what extent the most liberal minds

[1] See note on this subject, vol. i. p. 305.

are influenced by habit and prejudice, we should be astonished to see serious historians give less credit to the testimony of this great and loyal man[1] than to the assertions of one who never wrote a page in which he may not be detected in a piece of flagrant bad faith. They appear anxious to sacrifice to him all the glory and all the fame of the epoch, as if after his death, as well as during his life, his greatness only consists in the humiliation of all others; they seem to forget that his contemporaries adopted the same method to raise the idol that crushed them down for so long. But idols are not for history.

If it is possible that Kléber's report contains slight inaccuracies, it is at least impossible to deny its general statements, any more than we can deny its conclusion. Immediate evacuation was the best way of mending an error which had already lasted too long, and which could only engender worse and worse consequences. Everybody in the army knew it except three general officers, Desaix, Menou, and Davout. The opinion of Desaix was the only one which had much weight, and this only in a military point of view. Desaix, entirely devoted to Bonaparte, exalted by him to hurt the reputation of those who gave him umbrage, was an excellent general, but a mediocre character. His political convictions were limited, if he had any; he confined himself exclusively to his own sphere, putting aside the influences which modify, raise, and ennoble it. He considered his profession, not speaking of course of the civic duties connected with it, according to the new tendency of the army. He had no exaggerated ambition, and would never have thought of disputing the highest rank with any one. He was, in short, a man of a calling, and the highest type of it; and this was why Bonaparte liked him so well, for he gave the exact measure of Desaix when he said he would have made him his first marshal. Desaix believed resistance to be still possible, but what he

[1] Foreigners have been more just. Robert Wilson, who wrote almost under the dictation of the English army in Egypt, has rendered a magnificent homage to the generosity and elevation of Kléber's character: *History of the British Expedition to Egypt*, 1803.

did not perceive, with that breadth of view which constituted Kléber's superiority, was the uselessness of this resistance and its inevitable termination.

Bonaparte, who has bitterly taxed Kléber with dishonesty, read with an ecstasy of rage the report relating to the evacuation, and replied to him by most flattering compliments. He requested him to present his congratulations to the army on their immortal achievements; 'As for you,' he said, 'who have so fully justified the choice of the First Consul when, on his departure from Egypt, he entrusted you with the command of the army, do not doubt the satisfaction which he experiences at your return, and at the way in which you have sustained the honour of France.'[1] But shortly after he wrote to the Consuls: '*I regard the evacuation of Egypt as infamous.*'[2] And to Talleyrand: 'Say in the *Moniteur*, that if I had remained in Egypt this magnificent colony would still be in our hands; that the Grand Vizier had not more than *thirty thousand men* . . . that the squadron of Brest, which carried 6000 men, would have succeeded *in a month or two in bringing reinforcements to Egypt*,' etc.

The Grand Vizier had 80,000 men instead of 30,000, and the squadron would have brought no reinforcements, either in one month or two. However, the evacuation did not take place. All know how the capitulation of El Arisch was broken. In his eagerness to spare his country the efforts and the bloodshed which victory over our army in Egypt would have cost, Sir Sidney Smith, thinking that he could obtain the adhesion of his government, had taken in these negotiations the title of Minister Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty, a title which he had held, but which belonged to him no more since the arrival of Lord Elgin at Constantinople. But a few days after the ratification of the treaty which allowed our army to return to France, and before this convention was known in London, Admiral Keith received formal orders from the Admiralty, which instructed him not to consent to any capitulation unless our troops surrendered themselves prisoners of war. This

[1] To Kléber, April 19, 1800. [2] To the Consuls, May 15, 1800.

was not therefore any snare on the part of the English Government, for they hastened to ratify the convention as soon as they learned the part that Sir Sidney Smith had taken in it. But the latter had usurped power in his too eager good-will. Sir Sidney was in despair, for appearances were against him; he lost no time in writing to Kléber. The general soon after received from Admiral Keith a letter containing the hard conditions laid down by the English Cabinet. Kléber read it with his usual coolness: 'To-morrow,' he said calmly to the messenger, 'the admiral shall know my reply.'

The next day he published Keith's letter in an order of the day, followed by this laconic proclamation, the most simple, and at the same time the finest, that a general ever addressed to his troops: 'Soldiers, to such insults there is no other answer than victory. Prepare for action!' The army had already, according to the treaty, evacuated Upper Egypt and the most important posts, but this misfortune was not without compensation, for under the actual circumstances we could only conquer by a complete concentration of all our forces. However, notwithstanding the concentration and the reduction in the number of forts which they still occupied, Kléber was unable, even by the admission of the historians who have the most severely criticised him, and questioned the correctness of his figures, to gather in this time of peril more than 10,000 or 12,000 men[1] against the 80,000 men of the Turkish army. The battle took place near the ruins of Heliopolis. Under the inspiration and command of a hero, our army swept away this collection of barbarians like dust, in the most astonishing battle which Egypt has ever witnessed (March 20, 1800). It has been said that Kléber could offer no better refutation of his own assertions. But it must be remembered that the victory of Heliopolis, preceded by a preliminary evacuation of all the provinces which permitted the concentration

[1] M. Thiers says, *ten thousand soldiers*, though, at the same time, he maintains that the army consisted of 28,000, of which at *least twenty-two thousand were combatants* (*History of the Consulate*: Heliopolis). Where, then, were the remaining twelve thousand?

of all our forces on a single point, and achieved at a moment when the enthusiasm of the army was worked up to an extraordinary degree, was a kind of miracle; and that we cannot count on a miracle, especially not on a miracle wrought to-day returning on the morrow. That our army might gain one, two, three battles, Kléber had never doubted, but what he wished to avoid was expending so much useless heroism, and seeing so much blood shed which could only put off disasters that would still inevitably fall upon us.

After Heliopolis, a second conquest of Egypt had to be undertaken. It formed a happy contrast to the first by the clemency and humanity shown towards the vanquished. Mourad-Bey, the man who, at the time of the invasion, had been our most bitter enemy, deeply touched by the generous conduct of Kléber, came to his camp, swore fidelity to him, and gave him very effectual assistance in retaking Cairo. Kléber would not allow the triumphant return of our troops into this capital to be marked by any execution; he contented himself with levying contributions on the terrified inhabitants, now dreading a retaliation which the fearful remembrance left among them by General Bonaparte gave them such reason to expect. He reorganised the colony, gave a fresh impulse to the work of the Institute, enrolled and drilled in the European way battalions of Greeks, Cophts, and even negroes of Darfour. But instead of being deceived as to the result of triumphs which would have intoxicated any other man, he took advantage of his victory to enter into fresh negotiations with the Porte, in order to obtain, if possible, still more advantageous conditions. Things had gone so far, when a fanatic, inflamed by the religious hatred which put another deep chasm between Egypt and ourselves, cut off this noble life. If it was his lot to lose it thus early, he did not certainly deserve to waste it in an enterprise so unjust and so sterile. It has often been said of Kléber, 'that he would neither serve nor command.' Taken in a military sense, the assertion would have no meaning, for he gave abundant proofs that he could do both in equal perfection:

it must be understood in a political point of view, and in this sense it is a homage worthy of the man.

Kléber was the last survivor of that proud race of generals of which Hoche was the most glorious son, and to which Moreau himself only half belonged. These men of the Revolution were something more than mere soldiers. Imbued with all the ideas of their time, they shared its high ambitions; they thought themselves interested in all the questions that interested or agitated their country. Born in the midst of an unprecedented political storm, they saw their country torn by factions, but they only knew it when it was free, and never bowed before anything but the law. They were not of that stamp of men who sold their dignity and political independence for the truncheon of a marshal, or servilely bent before an equal who had become their master. It is as hard to suppose them satisfied servants under this gilded yoke, as to imagine Mirabeau, Danton, or Vergniaud in a chamber of mutes. All that remains of these men bears traces of nobler minds, of a stronger race, incomparably greater than all that crowd of the true men of the Empire, who out of the field of battle had neither heart nor head. They neither served the same cause nor sought the same honours, for they lived and died poor; but since the Revolution was doomed to fall into the hands of soldiers, it is deeply to be regretted that those who were great citizens as well as great captains were not called to exert a more powerful influence on its destinies.

As a natural consequence of these events, the English were much better acquainted than the First Consul with our true position in Egypt; for two years the greater part of our convoys had fallen into their hands, and with them all the most intimate correspondence of the soldiers and officers of the army. The death of Kléber, the commission of his post to a man whose principal recommendation consisted in the flattery he had always lavished upon Bonaparte, the desperate situation of Malta, then on the point of surrendering, were facts calculated to encourage the English Cabinet; and their obstinacy in trying to gain admission to a congress with Austria arose entirely from a desire to gain time for

their ally. When the First Consul refused to sanction this admission without the agreement to a naval armistice, he proposed an impossibility, for such an armistice could mean but one thing,—the revictualling of Malta and the army of Egypt. It was asking England to sacrifice all the fruits of her long efforts, just when she was about to reap them; and it was to prejudge the result of the congress, since it would consolidate beforehand our two most disputed possessions. Such an offer was evidently too derisive to be accepted; however, as the British Cabinet had a strong interest in prolonging the debate, it replied by a very ingenious counter-proposition. They consented to put Malta and Alexandria on the same footing as the strongholds in Germany; but these towns were only to receive provisions from day to day, and in proportion to their need, as long as the armistice lasted. They would consent to Malta and Alexandria being treated in the same way. This counter-proposition, which boldly marked the real difficulty, compelled the First Consul to unmask his aim. His representative, M. Otto, appeared disposed to accept the compromise with regard to Malta, but he stipulated that six frigates, large enough to carry about 6000 men each, should enter the port of Alexandria without being searched, which put an end to the negotiation. It had been going on all through the month of September, and before it was brought to a close Malta had fallen, after having held out for two years, to the great honour of General Vaubois.

We had not entirely broken with Austria, notwithstanding the deception caused by the disavowal of M. de Saint-Julien; both sides had resolved to open another conference at Lunéville, and the First Consul consented to an extension of the armistice for forty-five days, on condition that Ulm, Philipsburg, and Ingolstadt should be given up to him.

This convention was signed by Moreau at Hohenlinden, in the village whose name he was soon to immortalise by his great deeds. The fall of M. de Thugut, which happened at that very time, and the nomination of M. de Cobentzel as plenipotentiary at Lunéville, seemed a good omen for

the conclusion of peace. M. de Cobentzel was the negotiator of Campo-Formio; he had contrived to gain the favour of General Bonaparte. France was to be represented at Lunéville by Joseph Bonaparte, a diplomatist of the lowest order, who would never have been thought of if the First Consul had not already begun to consider himself as the head of a dynasty, of which the various members were invited to seize all the privileges of birth. M. de Cobentzel, who was the most fitting person to carry out the necessarily dilatory policy of the Cabinet of Vienna, did not arrive at Lunéville till the end of October; not finding Joseph there, he went straight to Paris. Talleyrand soon perceived that, although his powers were perfectly regular, the Austrian diplomatist would never consent to treat if England were not admitted to the congress. Bonaparte, to whom he communicated this fresh disappointment, abused M. de Cobentzel; he gave vent to one of those violent outbursts of passion which became more overbearing and more frequent in proportion as his power increased: 'If M. de Cobentzel has nothing better to tell us, he could return as quickly as possible!' However, he made no objection to the opening of the Conferences at Lunéville, where the two negotiators met. M. de Cobentzel showed to Joseph that his instructions did not impose upon him the necessity of absolutely refusing to treat except conjointly with England; but he maintained that he could not do so without consulting his Court. His courier found great difficulty in reaching Vienna, and the answer was long in coming.[1]

As soon as this means of gaining time was exhausted, M. de Cobentzel discovered another and better-grounded one: this was the occupation of Tuscany by the French troops. The Convention of Alessandria had decided that Tuscany should continue to be occupied by the imperial army.[2] This right evidently included that of raising militia,

[1] Joseph to Talleyrand, November 15, 1800.

[2] Napoleon has asserted that 'in the Convention of Alessandria *nothing was said about Tuscany*.' Now Article III of this Convention is worded thus:—'The army of H. I. M. will occupy both Tuscany and Ancona.'

or it was thus that on our side we interpreted it with regard to Piedmont and Lombardy; it was, however, these levies and the pretended project of a descent of the English in Tuscany,[1] which were used as a pretext for a fresh invasion, not less iniquitous than the first. Leghorn was again given over to pillage, and, this time, the English merchant-ships did not escape the trap laid for them by our army.

It is scarcely necessary to add that not one of the motives alleged at the time or since was sincere or well founded. The First Consul had only one which he never acknowledged: he seized Tuscany, because he wished to hold it at the proclamation of peace, in order to dispose of it in favour of the king of Spain's son-in-law, to whom he had already offered it.

Such proceedings were little calculated to increase confidence or facilitate negotiations for peace. M. de Cobentzel, with the usual resources of diplomatic verbiage, profited by this state of things, and thus gained the end of the armistice (November 28, 1800). As, in spite of the floods of words that were poured out on both sides, it was well understood that Austria would not negotiate separately, a new appeal to arms was resolved, the negotiations of Lunéville still pending, and Moreau received orders to resume the offensive.

Moreau's army had received reinforcements during the three months it had remained stationary on the Inn, which brought it up to rather more than 100,000 men. The First Consul had besides given him as a support a Franco-Batavian *corps d'armée*, commanded by Augereau, and placed on the banks of the Mein to keep in check the free corps raised by Austria in Suabia and Franconia. This little force of about 20,000 men, too far from Moreau to give him any effectual help, would have proved more useful had it been united to his own; for it would, and did in

[1] M. Thiers speaks of this design as if he believed it to be sincere. Napoleon, who was the first to allege it as chief of the state, did not believe in it as historian. 'The armistice,' he says, 'prevented the English from landing, since such an act would certainly have sufficed to bring on a rupture.'—*Mémoires*.

fact, stop his progress, and contributed very little to his security. In Italy, Brune, suddenly appointed to succeed Masséna, who had been deprived of his command for administrative blunders which were neither more nor less numerous than before and after this singular disgrace, had under his command an army about equal to that of Moreau. He was also protected by a kind of eccentric rear-guard, commanded by Murat, and facing Central Italy and the Neapolitans. Lastly, a fifth corps was placed in an intermediary situation, under the command of Macdonald. This General occupied the Canton of the Grisons with 15,000 men, and from there could descend by one or the other of the Tyrols either into Italy or Germany. The Austrians could pit against us armies of equal size, if not of equal strength. Before Moreau was Archduke John, a great military theorist, and a great admirer of General Bonaparte, whose tactics he intended to imitate; he had under him 80,000 men, supported on one side by a corps of 20,000 soldiers under Klénau, and on the other by Iller, encamped with 30,000 men in Tyrol. On the banks of the Mincio was Marshal de Bellegarde, with 90,000 men in excellent defensive positions.

This time again our army of Germany had not been more favoured than that of Italy, although it was more than ever evident that it alone could strike the decisive blow. But Moreau was now master of his movements, his action was no longer subjected to that of the army of Italy by any treaty; and no one could again outstrip him, owing to the immense progress he had made in his first campaign, the Inn being much nearer than the Mincio to the heart of the Austrian monarchy.

The two armies set forth on the 28th of November. The season was cold and rainy, but this circumstance, which, at the time of the treaty of Campo-Formio, Bonaparte had alleged as an urgent reason for concluding peace, had now no weight with him; and he who dared not pass the Col de Tarvis in the month of October required of Macdonald that he should cross the Splügen in the middle of December. Moreau, who until then had been quartered

on the plateau which overlooks Munich, on the other side of the Isar, proceeded in three columns towards the Inn, for the double purpose of reconnoitring the country about this river, which was difficult to reach, and of driving the Austrian outposts to the opposite bank. Faithful to his prudent and sure method, he had sent the corps of Sainte-Suzanne in the direction of Ingolstadt, to protect his rear from Klénau and to support if necessary the army of Augereau. On his extreme right the corps of Lecourbe, though much nearer, accomplished the same purpose, by sheltering him from any attack from the Austrian army who occupied the Tyrol. Moreau's army thus faced the Inn along a distance of about forty-five miles; the right under Lecourbe was at Rosenheim; the centre under Moreau at Wasserbourg; the left under Grenier at Mühldorf.

In all probability the Archduke John would confine himself to defending the passage of the Inn. Intrenched behind a natural obstacle of such great strength, he was almost inexpugnable. It was not likely that he would voluntarily deprive himself of this position, to attack such an enemy as Moreau; hence the reason why this general extended his front to such a length. However, it was precisely the improbable which came true. The archduke, inflamed by the temerity of youth and the miraculous success which had attended General Bonaparte's daring strokes, conceived one of the boldest plans, which consisted in nothing less than cutting off Moreau's army. One thing was needed to carry out such a plan: sufficient strength to execute it, for the only effect of an attempt to cut off a superior force is that the general who makes it is himself cut off. The archduke had resolved to cross the Inn at Braunau, above our positions, then to get over the Isar at Landshut, and from thence come and place himself at Munich on our line of retreat. He might have carried out this much-boasted plan, without compromising the safety of an army so superior to his own; the only result would have been the loss of his own communications. However, he soon felt its weakness, and gave it up on the way. Falling in with our left in the neighbourhood of Ampfingen, he

assailed it with almost all his forces on the 1st of December. But Grenier's corps, though surprised by an enemy double in number, was reinforced in time by a division of the centre, and fell back without having the line broken into the forest of Hohenlinden which was on our rear. In the centre of this forest was a small cleared plain, in the middle of which stands the village of Hohenlinden. It was in this position, which he had long studied, that Moreau made Grenier's corps halt and wait for the archduke. That corps he supported with strong reserves and a division of the centre; and the latter, reduced to the divisions Decaen and Richepanse, was placed at Ebersberg, at a short distance from Hohenlinden. In this central position Moreau was master of all the avenues of the forest; he occupied all the high roads leading to Munich, and the Austrians could not march upon that city without coming upon his front.

The most important of these highroads was the one which goes from Mühldorf to Munich across the forest, passing first by Mattenpoet, then by Hohenlinden. It was in this long and dark defile that, on the morning of the 3d of December, in a tremendous snow-storm, which blinded the soldiers, the archduke engulfed himself with the greater part of his army, his hundred pieces of artillery, and all his train. His other corps were obliged to take cross-roads still more impassable, which last circumstance was of a nature highly prejudicial both to the precision and unity of the operation: Riesch at his left with 12,000 men, at his right Kienmayer and Baillet-Latour, who were to advance by Lendorf and Hartofen. Before even these movements were completely formed, Moreau had given orders to the divisions Decaen and Richepanse, who were at Ebersberg, to make their way round into the forest, as the Austrians emerged from it, and as soon as they arrived at Mattenpoet by Saint-Christophe, to turn near Hohenlinden upon the rear of the principal column of the archduke. This manœuvre, bold and simple, like the inspiration of genius, was entrusted to a man thoroughly capable of understanding and carrying it out; it was to decide the success of the day.

It was half-past seven in the morning when the head of the Austrian column appeared before Hohenlinden. Moreau, aided by Grenier, Ney, and Grouchy, confined himself to a vigorous reception of the troops which poured out against him, in order to give Richepanse sufficient time to effect his movement upon Mattenpoet, and to allow the Austrians to penetrate deeper into the forest. He had already repulsed two successive attacks, when he observed a movement of hesitation, a sort of undulation in the enemy's line, an unmistakable sign of the presence of Richepanse at the rear of the Austrians. He immediately concentrates the divisions of Ney and Grouchy into one body, then he sends them forward into the pass, into which they rush with irresistible force and impetuosity. Ney overwhelms the Austrians, who scatter through the forest in fearful disorder; he rushes at full pace into the defile of which no one attempts to dispute the access, and half-way between Hohenlinden and Mattenpoet his soldiers raise a loud cry of joy on recognising those of Richepanse. They effect a junction across the army of the enemy who were retreating on all sides, and embrace with enthusiasm on the field of battle they had so gloriously won. In his movement from Ebersberg upon Mattenpoet, Richepanse, who had started before Decaen, had encountered half-way the corps of Riesch, but fully understanding the necessity of executing at any price the operation which had been entrusted to him, he had pursued his route, leaving a single brigade only to oppose Riesch, certain that it would be disengaged by Decaen, who was following him. At Mattenpoet he encountered again fresh troops, and, sacrificing everything to the principal object, he again left there half of the brigade which remained to him. It was then with a few battalions only that he entered the defile into which the Austrian column had penetrated, but he rushed headlong into it with such impetuosity that a dreadful panic spread among the troops overtaken by so unexpected an attack. It was then that Moreau had perceived the counter-stroke, and that Ney had thrown himself in front of Richepanse. The Austrians, seeing themselves attacked in front and rear

in this narrow passage, are seized with indescribable terror; they abandon cannon and baggage, and rush right and left into the forest, where our soldiers make them prisoners by thousands.

At three o'clock the whole of this formidable column which formed the centre and pivot of the Austrian army was annihilated. It was at that time when its right, consisting of the corps of Latour and Kienmayer, still ignorant of the disaster, entered very tardily on the field of battle, near Burkrain. They were met by two divisions of Grenier, who were waiting with impatience the moment of entering into action. These divisions, commanded by Legrand and Bastoul, resisted the attack with intrepidity, then having received reinforcements, they took the offensive, overthrew the enemy, and seized part of his artillery. Upon our right the previsions of Richepanse were fully realised: the brigade which he had left to fight the corps of Riesch had been disengaged by Decaen, and this general had driven back the Austrians upon the Inn. We were victorious at all points. Twenty thousand men killed or captured, ninety pieces of cannon and an immense quantity of baggage taken from the enemy; such were the results of this overwhelming battle, one of the most brilliant that was ever won, in which we fought with less than 60,000 men against more than 70,000. Moreau's combinations had been full of simplicity and greatness; he had foreseen everything, prepared for all possible surprises; his calmness, his tact, his firmness in action, had revealed in him a military genius which was increasing every day; Ney had been admirable for his ardour, Richepanse had displayed incomparable spirit and intelligence in the execution of the manœuvre which had been entrusted to him; in short, chiefs and soldiers had shown themselves at the height of one of the grandest days of our military history; but finer than all these results and all these feats of arms was the noble enthusiasm which burst forth that day in our old army of the Rhine! Those patriotic effusions, those fraternal embraces on the field of battle, the modesty of the chief forgetting himself to share his glory with his companions, the celebration of victory in

the name of peace and liberty, were already customs belonging to a bygone epoch; they were never seen again in our armies. Hohenlinden is the last of our Republican victories.

It would be difficult to find a term to describe the criticism which Napoleon has left of this battle. If the word *jealousy*, which his contemporaries have not hesitated to utter on this occasion, ought to be withdrawn on the ground that he had the right to be jealous of no one, it is impossible to deny that his criticisms are inspired by the meanest and most miserable hatred. The man who had so long been regarded in Europe as his rival, and whose twofold campaign of 1800 entitles him to rank among the most illustrious captains, is treated by him as a thoughtless schoolboy; his victory is manifestly the effect of chance, and his combinations are vastly inferior to those of Archduke John. He was wrong to leave behind him Sainte-Suzanne's corps, which watched Klénau; wrong to leave on his right Lecourbe's corps, which guarded the approaches to the Tyrol, where there was an army of 30,000 or 40,000 men; but, above all, he was wrong to gain so brilliant a victory: this is what his antagonist cannot forgive. What of the manœuvre entrusted to Richepanse? *He had given no orders at all*, and, moreover, it would have been *contrary to all rules!* Richepanse's mission was to hinder the Austrians from entering the forest, not to fall on their rear; his *despair* and *imprudence* did the rest! Thus the modest and conscientious Moreau was accused of falsehood in the face of the whole army in ascribing to himself, in his report to the Minister of War (dated December 3), the order given to Richepanse and Decaen to 'march upon Mattenpoet by Saint-Christophe and to fall vigorously upon the rear of the Austrians.' Moreau, so ready always to recognise the services of his brothers in arms, could thus have appropriated to himself the glory which belonged to Richepanse, who never thought of complaining! The accusation is doubtless from a man of genius, but of a marvellously selfish mind, and in his disdainful silence Moreau is infinitely greater than the man whose hatred would willingly have blotted

out even the remembrance of his brilliant actions. Moreover, the order exists; even those who only repeat with exaggerations the view taken by the writer of St. Helena, are forced to acknowledge it. The order sent to Richepanse directs him to march from Ebersberg to Mattenpoet, by Saint-Christophe, and to '*attack the enemy after their actual advance upon Hohenlinden.*'[1] It has been urged that these instructions were 'too general, not sufficiently detailed,' as if an order to march six miles needed to be circumstantially detailed, as if the whole order did not consist in the direction to take and the object of the manœuvre, as if in short more particular indications would not have hampered Richepanse by minute prescriptions which might have exposed him to sacrifice the principal end to secondary objects and thus arrive too late at Mattenpoet. These puerile detractions by copyists are more intolerable than the envenomed attacks of the master, who was actuated by feelings about which, at any rate, there can be no mistake. It is useless to argue that these appreciations were written under the impression of the subsequent disputes between Bonaparte and Moreau. Savary, a man whose testimony with regard to Bonaparte may well be trusted, asserts that so early as Marengo he severely criticised all Moreau's acts, and even accused him *of having caused the negotiations for peace to fail.* Bonaparte hated Moreau since he had opposed his plan of campaign, and manifested his disapprobation of the measures which had followed the 18th Brumaire. But he judged it wise to dissemble his feelings at the time, and when he had to announce the victory of Hohenlinden to the Legislative Assembly, he expressed himself in very different language from that of his private conversations and his *Mémoires.* 'All Europe,' he said, 'has resounded with this victory; it will be reckoned in history amongst the most brilliant days that have immortalised French valour' (January 2, 1800). And to Moreau himself he wrote referring to these same manœuvres which appeared to him so senseless: 'I cannot tell you how much interest I have taken in *your brilliant and clever manœuvres.*' A man needs

[1] *Mémorial du dépôt de la Guerre*, vol. iv.

have no uneasiness about his glory when his enemies are compelled thus to contradict themselves.

After such a blow the Austrian army was unable to stop Moreau's progress. He crossed the Inn, the Alza, the Salza, the Ens, under their eyes, beat them in detachments in several successive encounters, took their artillery and several thousand prisoners, and a fortnight after the battle of Hohenlinden he had advanced eighty leagues and was close to Vienna. The Archduke Charles, who had succeeded his brother in the command of the Imperial troops, asked for an armistice. Moreau's lieutenants urged him to enter Vienna, and everything seemed to invite him to do so; it was the natural reward of his victory; the effect would have been a hundredfold more striking in the eyes of the vulgar, who only judge by appearances, and there was a man in Paris who would have been half killed with vexation by such a triumph. But Moreau knew that Augereau's corps was in danger; he had no news, either, of the army of Italy; his soldiers, too, were worn out by these rapid marches in such inclement weather, and he gloried in never having caused the blood of a single soldier to be shed uselessly. It is perhaps to be regretted for the cause he had never ceased to serve, in spite of a momentary error, that he did not possess a little of the charlatanism which had become necessary to every one who desired to gain great influence over his contemporaries; it is certainly to be regretted for his own reputation, for no one, either then or now, has ever given him credit for an abnegation so uncommon and so superior to the vanity of conquerors.

The armistice was signed at Steyer, the 25th of December, and Augereau was thus extricated from his perilous situation. Meanwhile, the army in Italy had in its turn commenced operations on the Mincio, but, indolently conducted by a general unfit for so important a task, it gained only indecisive successes, and even these were solely due to the boldness of Brune's lieutenants and soldiers. His inability very nearly made the engagement of Pozzolo a real disaster for his army. However, he succeeded in crossing the Mincio and the Adige; he had reached Trent,

where he was to effect his junction with Macdonald, when the news of the armistice arrived, thus relieving him from giving additional proofs of his incapacity. Macdonald was at the appointed place with the army of the Grisons: he had won few engagements, but he had accomplished a miracle in comparison with which the passage of Mount Saint-Bernard was child's play; he had crossed the Splügen in the middle of the month of December. On the receipt of a positive order from the First Consul to march, founded on this questionable aphorism, 'that wherever two men could put their feet, an army could pass,' he had led his 15,000 men across mountains of ice where avalanches carried off whole squadrons. After great suffering he had succeeded in bringing them into the Tyrol across the Valteline; but these obscure exploits did not draw on them the attention of Europe, and no one thought this time of quoting Hannibal.

While war, that sovereign negotiator, was doing its work, Joseph and M. de Cobentzel were at Lunéville, waiting for the future to be decided by the force of events. After the armistice of Steyer they resumed conferences for peace. But the First Consul, wishing from the outset to secure rapidity, interrupted the debate by a manifestation which pledged his policy and prevented him from receding. In his message of the 2d of January 1801 to the Legislative Body, after having proposed to the Assembly to decree that the armies had deserved well of the country, he declared that peace could only be concluded on condition that France had the Rhine and that Austria should be satisfied with the Adige. This ultimatum, expressed in so offensive a manner, prejudged the question which was under discussion at Lunéville: M. de Cobentzel complained of it with reason, but this did not prevent his defending successively and step by step, the Oglio, the Chiesa, the Mincio, and lastly the Adige, with all the art of the most skilful captain. Nevertheless he had to yield to necessity, and on the 15th of January he accepted the limit of the Adige[1] on condition that Tuscany should be restored to the grand duke, or that

[1] Joseph to Talleyrand, January 15th, 1801.

the Legations should be given him as an equivalent, which Talleyrand had formerly conceded as early as January 2d.[1] Everything was now settled except the question of the indemnities to be given to the princes dispossessed upon the Rhine. Cobentzel insisted on an immediate conclusion, and they were on the point of signing, when Joseph received an order to slacken the negotiations. A change as complete as it was sudden had taken place in the requirements of the First Consul. This fresh surprise proved to M. de Cobentzel that his secret apprehensions were only too well founded, and that he had got his old antagonist of Campo-Formio to deal with. A letter from Talleyrand (dated January 24th) prescribed to Joseph a perfectly new programme, much more unfavourable to Austria than anything that had preceded it. This power was now to give up Tuscany for ever without any indemnity; Austria was, moreover, to indemnify the princes dispossessed on the left side of the Rhine at the expense of the ecclesiastical princes, stipulating in the name of the German Empire.

These demands were not founded on any fresh grief against Austria. The only motive for making them was the reconstruction of the ancient League of the Neutrals under the auspices of Russia, and the rupture of Paul I. with the English, who had refused to give him the island of Malta, which he required for his seat as Grand Master of the Order. Prussia having joined the League, and Paul being more and more irritated with the Court of Vienna, Austria found herself isolated on the continent and at the mercy of the conqueror. Talleyrand did not even think it necessary to dissemble the reason for the change; he alleged in his letter of January 24th, 'Our fresh relations with Russia and the well-known sentiments of Prussia, as these two Powers had an equal interest in preventing the emperor from becoming too powerful in Italy;' but Joseph, who, as a novice in diplomacy, was weak enough to feel scrupulous about breaking his pledged word, now felt sorely embarrassed in his relations with his colleague; he tried to convince the First Consul of the necessity of indemnifying

[1] Talleyrand to Joseph, January 9th.

the grand duke; he reminded him of the solemn promises he had made him. 'You know,' he ingenuously wrote, '*that I did not do this out of my own head*, I had received a definite order' (January 29th, 1801). It was all in vain, he received an injunction not to yield; and as M. de Cobentzel did not immediately submit to such an abuse of force, Talleyrand threatened him afresh, not so much with our armies as with Russia: 'The animosity of the emperor of Russia is so great,' he wrote, 'that it was quite possible he would wish to *restore to the Venetian State its ancient organisation*' (February 6th, 1801).

These arguments prevailed at last, and peace was signed. The treaty of Lunéville was little more than a second edition of that of Campo-Formio, except the article respecting Tuscany, which was erected into a kingdom in favour of the young Infant of Parma. It sanctioned the bondage of Venice under Austria and the conquest of Northern Italy for France, a conquest still concealed, though not for long, under the name of the Cisalpine Republic. It left, in short, between the two contracting parties something more than the regret for what one of the two had lost; it left the remembrance of a sort of diplomatic trap. In spite of the grandeur and glory of our successes, peace in reality only existed on paper.

CHAPTER III

THE PLOTS—SESSION OF THE YEAR IX (1800–1801)—THE LEAGUE OF THE NEUTRALS

WHILST Moreau's victories and the negotiations of Lunéville were giving a fresh *éclat* to the Consular policy, and Bonaparte, instead of sharing the honour resulting from it with his fellow-citizens, was showing an increasing disposition to appropriate it to his own exclusive profit, the people whose hopes he ruined, perceiving at last that their ultimate success depended on his downfall, were fostering resolutions as desperate as the situation in which they were placed Although these men were assuredly incapable of feeling any scruples about the choice of means, it is deserving of notice that neither Bonaparte's dictatorship nor his excessive severity towards them could induce them to employ the desperate expedients which do more harm to those who use them than to him against whom they are directed. They considered his dictatorship as temporary and transitory; as for his severe measures, they fervently meant to retaliate when their time should come. But when he clearly announced his intention to usurp sovereignty, and take the throne which they could suffer to remain empty, but not to be filled by an adventurer, the conspirators ceased to wage against him a war of principles or interests, and resolved to attack the man himself.

Of all these plots, which were narrowly watched by his private police, the First Consul only seriously feared those of the old Jacobin party. He considered that they alone possessed sufficient energy to carry out a conspiracy. Having formerly belonged to this party himself, he knew that

he was the object of that special hatred which invariably strikes apostates; but his recollections of the Reign of Terror deceived him with regard to what the Jacobins, decimated by so many proscriptions or gained by the seductions of power, were now capable of daring or undertaking. The pretended plot of Cerachi and Aréna, a miserable bugbear invented by the police, whose provocations had not even succeeded in enticing the conspirators into the building in which the plot was supposed to take effect, had clearly shown that this party was more lavish of declamation than capable of energetic action. After this, an explosive machine of the kind manufactured for the navy, and somewhat resembling the one afterwards known as the infernal machine, was seized in the house of a mechanic named Chevalier, an enthusiastic republican, formerly employed by the Committee of Public Safety, and the inventor of an inextinguishable fuse. But Chevalier alleged that the machine was ordered by a ship-owner in Bordeaux, and there was not the slightest proof that he had intended to use it against the life of the First Consul.

In spite of these facts, or rather on account of them, Fouché, who knew better than any one their factitious character and the undue significance given to them, and more clear-sighted than the First Consul because he had more coolness, persisted in attaching more importance to the plots of royalist agents, at that moment assembled in considerable numbers in Paris in consequence of the pacification of the West, than to those of the Jacobins. He was, in fact, well acquainted with all the movements of this sect, whom he paid and kept watch over, either himself or with the help of some of his old friends of the Mountain, like Barrère, who had become a police spy after having governed France as member of the Committee of Public Safety. Surrounded by returned emigrants, by the moderates with whom hatred and fear of the terrorists had become a fixed idea, by old friends of Sieyès, who waged incessant war against Fouché and the rallied *montagnards*, the First Consul, who was really not sorry to see these divisions, which, according to his own expression, guarded

his right and left and raised him above the ancient parties as a supreme and necessary arbiter, gave however far more credit to the denunciations of the first than to the warnings of the others. He regarded Fouché's advice as dictated by a remnant of Jacobin fanaticism, and as he often talked himself of the part Pitt was taking in the royalist plots, without the least belief in it, he fancied that all these conspiracies were equally imaginary except the intrigues of what he chose to call the *English Committee.* English influence, it is true, was actively used in keeping alive the flame of civil discord, which had latterly degenerated into highway warfare, but the English had never descended so low as to encourage plots against the life of the First Consul. Such plots did, however, exist among the lower depths of the Chouans, and Bonaparte deemed it politic to appear to give credit to the reports, but in reality he never believed in them. Still, the illegal means he had not shrunk from employing against this party on different occasions, more especially when he had put a price on the head of the Comte de Frotté and his companions, and at the time of Toustaint's execution, were not of a nature to justify such security. More recently, after his interview with Georges Cadoudal, and his useless efforts to gain him, he had almost immediately afterwards regretted that he had allowed him to escape. On hearing that he had returned to France after a short visit to England, he wrote to Bernadotte letter after letter, urging him to get rid by any means of that troublesome enemy. Whenever Bonaparte was opposed by a really dangerous enmity, a formidable obstacle, an indomitable spirit, we see the primitive man reappear in him, the Corsican of violent and savage passions and a policy untouched by scruple.

Long before the Chouans had made any attempt on his life, he looked upon Georges, not as a political enemy to overcome, but as a man to be got rid of at any price. He wrote to Bernadotte about Georges, just as he had written to Friant about Mourad-Bey, and to Brune about Frotté: 'Take that rascal Georges alive or dead. If you once get hold of him, have him shot within twenty-four

hours as having been in England after the capitulation.'[1] A month later he again wrote: 'Capture that wretch Georges, and have him shot in twenty-four hours;'[2] and a few days later: 'take him and shoot him.'[3] Now, at that time, there was no insurrection either in Brittany or Vendée; to send such orders to a man who was, besides, incapable of executing them, it was enough that Bonaparte should fear one.

The 3d Nivôse (December 24, 1800), as the First Consul was going to the Opera to hear one of Haydn's Oratorios, his carriage was stopped in the middle of the Rue Saint-Nicaise by a small cart which impeded its progress; the coachman, however, skilfully avoided the obstacle. But he had scarcely turned the corner of the street when a violent report was heard. The explosion, which resembled the shock of an earthquake, lifted the carriage from the ground, and shook all the houses in the neighbourhood. Four persons were killed on the spot, sixty others were more or less seriously wounded, forty-six houses were greatly damaged.[4] The First Consul, however, persisted in going to the Opera. He appeared in his box with Madame Bonaparte, who was still pale with fright; he himself tried to look unmoved, but the uneasy working of his features betrayed his secret agitation. 'The wretches have tried to blow me up,' he said to Rapp. He stayed but a few moments at the Opera, and returned to the Tuileries.

The next morning the *Moniteur* published accounts of the machine seized in Chevalier's house, of the intrigues of the Jacobins who were supposed to be his accomplices, and public opinion immediately credited the story that the plot against the First Consul was the work of anarchists and Septembriseurs. Deputations from all the bodies of the State, the Mayors of Paris, the members of the Municipal Council, came to congratulate the First Consul on his escape from the danger. Their satisfaction, legitimate enough in itself, had the defect of being expressed in terms

[1] Bonaparte to Bernadotte (June 4, 1800).
[2] Bonaparte to Bernadotte (July 4th).
[3] Bonaparte to Bernadotte (July 10th).
[4] Report of Dubois, Prefect of the Police (10th Nivôse).

of adulation which exceeded anything that had ever been heard before. In thanking 'destiny' for having spared a life so precious, they did not hesitate to name the guilty, though no one yet knew who they were. There was no doubt about it, the crime was evidently the work of Septembriseurs and Jacobins.[1] At the time of the arrest of Cerachi and his companions, the President of the Tribunate had delivered a speech which had attracted a great deal of attention for the courageous counsel he had dared to give the master: 'So wise and just a government,' he said, 'will only take notice of *real and serious conspiracies;* but when once they are reported, it engages to pursue the plotters with all the *solemnity* and rigour of *the law.*' This allusion to legal means, henceforth judged untimely, would now have been regarded as seditious language; it was replaced in the Address, delivered in the name of the Tribunate, by complaints of the insufficiency of the law to hinder such plots, and entreaties that the need should be met by new measures. All were unanimous in demanding prompt and terrible repression; some only timidly alleged that, in the absence of all proof, it would be premature to name the perpetrators of the crime.

Instead of mediating between the denunciators and the accused, Bonaparte was the first to pronounce his opinion, with a violence that far outdid the most extravagant of his flatterers. He had recognised the criminals from the first: 'it was the work of the same party who had dishonoured the Revolution and polluted the cause of liberty by all kinds of excesses, especially by the part they had taken in the events of the 2d and 3d of September; excesses that, from having remained unpunished, had familiarised the culprits with crime, which however it was now time to put a stop to.' He added 'that he was entirely devoted to his country, and that he attached as much glory to death in the exercise of his functions of First Consul for the support of the Republic and the Constitution, as to falling on the field of battle.'[2] In reply to the Orator of the Council of State,

[1] Speech of Frochot, Prefect of the Seine.
[2] Reply to the President of the Legislative Assembly.

he said: 'This was no attempt of nobles, Chouans, or priests; but of Septembriseurs, of wretches covered with crime, a serried battalion against every successive government. They were the instruments of September, of Versailles, of the 31st of May, of Prairial, of all subsequent attempts. It was absolutely necessary to find means of inflicting prompt punishment.' In reply to the Prefect Frochot he exclaimed: 'That as long as that handful of wretches confined themselves to direct attacks upon him, he could leave to laws and ordinary tribunals the task of punishing them; but since they had just endangered part of the population of the capital by a crime unexampled in history, their punishment should be equally speedy and terrible. These few score outcasts, whose crimes had gone far to dishonour liberty, should soon be completely deprived of the power to do more mischief.'

Thus, before he had any information of the crime, he imputed its responsibility not to individuals but to a whole class of men whom he had made responsible for it. He cared less about discovering the real culprits than for the opportunity of getting rid of all those whom he deemed capable of committing the crime. It was thus that he laid the case openly before the Council of State two days after the event. Some members had proposed to add to the bill on Special Tribunals, then under discussion in the Tribunate, two clauses which would have been a formidable weapon in the hands of Government. Bonaparte opposed the institution of a special tribunal as too slow. 'What was needed was vengeance as rapid as lightning. Blood must be shed; *as many of the guilty must be sacrificed as there had been victims; fifteen or twenty must be shot, and two hundred more transported, and the occasion seized to purge the Republic* . . . this example was necessary in order to bind the middle class to the Republic—a thing impossible to hope for as long as this class was threatened by *two hundred mad wolves*, who were only watching the moment to rush upon their prey. . . . They must consider all this as statesmen. For his own part, he was so thoroughly *convinced* of the necessity and justice of

a strong measure, that he was ready to have the villains brought before him, to examine them, to try them, and to sign the order for their execution.'[1]

As no one answered, Admiral Truguet rose to oppose the view taken by the First Consul. He did not wish to defend the Septembriseurs, but he thought the Government had other enemies equally dangerous—emigrants, Chouans, fanatic priests, men whose *pamphlets* corrupted the public mind. At the word pamphlet, the First Consul, stung by the allusion, suddenly interrupted Truguet: 'I will not be deceived by these declamations,' he exclaimed. 'The culprits are known: the nation has pointed them out. They are the Septembriseurs; the men who have committed every crime, who have been protected and spared by the mean ambitions of subordinates. Talk of nobles and priests! Must I proscribe on account of a quality? Must I send into exile ten thousand priests, old men! . . .'

Proscribe on account of a quality! it was just what he meant to do, but only in accordance with his own hatred and prejudices; applied to the Chouans, the measure appeared to him iniquitous; applied to the terrorists, it seemed deserved and just. The next day, he again tried to force the Council of State to pass the law he needed, in order to reach the party he wished to strike. The State Councillors hesitated, not from any scruple to give their consent to his demand, but from the difficulty they felt in drawing up a bill which would be accepted by the Legislative Assembly. Rœderer and Regnault expressed fear with regard to the Tribunate: 'You are always in the Antechamber of the Tribunate,' said Bonaparte. 'When once a measure is recognised as necessary, it must be passed. I have *a dictionary of the men employed in all the massacres.*'

'Extraordinary power is needed; who has authority to give it? If no one has this authority, ought the Government to assume it?' Then Talleyrand, usually so silent, rose: 'What is the good of having a Senate,' said he, 'if it is not to be made use of?'[2]

[1] Thibeaudeau: *Mémoires d'un Conseiller d'état.*
[2] Miot de Melito: *Mémoires.*

This remark of Talleyrand threw a light on the subject. It put them all at ease, the Councillors of State, by diminishing their responsibility, the First Consul, by freeing him from the troublesome control of the Legislative Assembly, and by giving an appearance of legality to what was a flagrant violation of the Constitution. It was decided, then, that the measure should be passed by the Government as a sort of war measure, and that it should be sanctioned by a *Senatus Consultum*, a convenient weapon borrowed from the old arsenal of Cæsarism. By means of this expedient, which had not been thought of till now, they were going to transform the Senate, guardian of the Constitution, into a real constituent power, modifying at will the contract confided to its vigilance, and invested with authority to legalise every arbitrary act. This new occupation for the Senate was a most precious discovery for Bonaparte. He lost no time in establishing it by a memorable precedent, with the full intention of turning it to advantage for his ulterior projects.

After some attempts to find a suitable form for this illegal act, Bonaparte again summoned a Council of State, on the 1st of January 1801. Several police reports on the plots, more or less hypothetical, which had preceded the attempt of the 3d Nivôse, were read at the beginning of the sitting. Fouché's conclusions with regard to the measures to be taken and the men to be arrested were then heard. Since the 3d Nivôse Fouché had become the object of invective; some went so far as to accuse him of complicity. His enemies in the camp of the moderates, Rœderer, Regnault, Portalis, finding the time for his overthrow was come, attacked him with great violence; they openly attributed the perpetration of the crime to his protection of his old friends of the Jacobin party; some regarded him as a man who would take advantage of the success of an affair, but disavow a failure. As for himself, convinced from the outset that the attempt sprang from the Chouan party, affected but by no means disconcerted by the storm of abuse which had burst upon him, he met the accusations of his adversaries with an impassive face

and a firm denial. What had at first been mere conjecture was now almost positive evidence. By means of broken pieces collected from the spot on which the crime had been committed, they were able to reconstruct a part of the infernal machine, a portion of the barrel and the cart; they had discovered the shopkeeper who had sold these things, as well as the man who had sold the horse. The confrontations afterwards made had not led to the discovery of the real culprits, but they had clearly proved the innocence of all the revolutionists who had been arrested as perpetrators or presumed accomplices of the crime. Two other circumstances corroborated Fouché's opinion; these were, the sudden aud complete disappearance of several of Georges' agents, whom up to the 3d Nivôse he had found no difficulty in tracing; and the striking resemblance between the portrait furnished by the witnesses and the known description of these men.

Fouché communicated these facts to Bonaparte, and, like his minister, he no longer believed in the guilt of the Jacobins, at any rate, in that of those who had been arrested; but for all this, he determined to get rid of them, and Fouché was the docile instrument of this iniquitous act. The result of the twofold assurance which both had acquired was that in this sitting of the 1st of January, in which the punishment of the perpetrators of the crime of the 3d Nivôse was to be discussed, scarcely any allusion was made to the crime itself. A list of citizens doomed to transportation was drawn up, '*not because they had been taken dagger in hand, but because they were universally known to be capable of preparing and executing it.*'[1] 'Forms of justice,' said Fouché, 'had never been established for the protection of such brigands.'

Rœderer having demanded that the report of the Minister of Police should at least contain a mention of the attempt of the 3d Nivôse, Bonaparte opposed this alteration: '*They had no proof*,' he said, '*that the terrorists were the culprits. They were transported, not for the 3d Nivôse, but for the deeds of the 2d of September, of the 31st of May,*

[1] Fouché's Report.

for Babeuf's conspiracy. The last event was not the cause of the measure, it was only the occasion of it.'[1]

The report was followed by a list of a hundred and thirty-three names, taken out of what Bonaparte termed his *dictionary*. It included the greater number of the men whom he had wished to proscribe on the day following the 18th Brumaire. At that time he had been withheld by the fear of public opinion, but his heart, inaccessible to pardon, had never relented. He now took advantage of the error which he had himself encouraged against them, to accomplish their ruin. A great number of men even in the bosom of the Council of State would have refused their adhesion to the measure, if like him they had had the assurance that not one of the individuals accused had taken any part in the attempt of the 3d Nivôse; he did not say a word to undeceive them. Amongst the proscribed were men who, as Réal remarked, were employed by Government, such as Baudray, for five years a judge in Guadaloupe; another, Pâris, had been dead for six months, so hastily had the list been drawn up. The name of Prince Charles of Hesse was there, one of the most ardent, though at the same time the most inoffensive, of visionaries; that of the courageous Destrem, the same who, on the 18th Brumaire, had hurled at Bonaparte these words of antique elevation: 'Is it for this that thou hast conquered?'—that of Bottot, whose only crime was that he had been secretary to Barras; that of Talot, an old convention man, guilty like Destrem of having protested against the *coup-d'état*, a strong republican but unsullied by any excess; that of Lefranc the architect, a man whose imagination was ardent, but who could be reproached with nothing beyond his declamations. The list also included the names of Choudieu, of Felix Lepelletier, of Tissot, men who, notwithstanding their extreme opinions and violent conduct in the Revolution, did not however deserve to be included in the category of Septembriseurs with men covered with blood and mud, like Jourdeuil or

[1] See the accounts given of the sitting by Thibeaudeau, Miot, etc. 'For my part,' says Miot, 'I shall never console myself for having taken part in it.'

Fournier the American. Even these latter, sullied as they were, having been amnestied by the reactions, were placed under the safeguard of public good faith. After the reading of the list, the Council decided in spite of the opposition of Truguet that the measure should not be made a law, but an act of State police to be referred to the Senate, who should pronounce 'whether or not this measure was essential to *the preservation of the Constitution.*' In consequence, the Consul drew up a decree, dated January 4th, 1801, which 'placed under special surveillance out of the European territory of the Republic' a list of citizens reduced to the number of a hundred and thirty; and the Senate 'considering that necessary measures of security had never been determined to meet cases of the kind,' hastened to declare that the act of the Government was 'a measure conducive to the preservation of the Constitution.'

The next day the convoy of prisoners started in the direction of Nantes. With the exception of two, all those who embarked died in the land of transportation;[1] some obtained the favour of being confined in Oléron. It was there that Destrem, a man of irreproachable conduct, died obscurely in 1805, at the time when, by one of those striking contrasts which seem to cast doubts on the reality of Providence, his fortunate persecutor had just been crowned emperor. The death of this innocent man did not silence a single shout of applause which greeted the new Cæsar; it was not even recorded by historians, for what is the death of an innocent man in comparison to the ceremony of a coronation? Such is the miserable human flock! Talot was more fortunate; he survived as well as Choudieu, who contrived to escape.

When the explosion of the 3d Nivôse took place, Cerachi and his companions had been in prison for nearly three months without having been brought to trial, so insufficient was the evidence against them. There was in fact nothing

[1] 'The Misfortunes of several Victims of Tyranny, by one of the two survivors (Lefranc).' History of the Double Conspiracy of 1800, by Fescourt.

to reproach them with, but violent language in clubs and workshops.

Some police agents, led on by a villain named Harel, had been the sole contrivers of the plot. The day on which, according to them, the Consul was going to be assassinated, Cerachi alone was in the Opera-house, and he was unarmed. The only testimony which could be brought forward was the evidence of Barrère, who being cautioned by his friend Demerville not to go to the Opera, hastened to denounce him to General Lannes, commander of the Consular Guard. But Demerville had believed in the attempt of the false conspirators led by Harel; he had taken no part in it himself. Harel had done everything. It was he who, by his own admission, had bought the pistols; it was he who had offered men to carry out the plot; it was he who had afterwards distributed the arms. His evidence was a tissue of improbabilities and flagrant contradictions. In order to induce *four men* to commit the crime, he pretended that he had only received the sum of one hundred and fifty francs. He had never seen Aréna, and did not recognise him at the trial. A soldier dismissed from the service, he had contrived the dark scheme to give himself importance, and Demerville's weak head had been caught in the trap.[1] On hearing of the explosion of the infernal machine, Aréna exclaimed, 'That is our death warrant!' He was not mistaken. The Government took advantage of the impression of horror produced by the event of the Rue Saint-Nicaise, to wring their condemnation from a terrified and prejudiced jury. Cerachi and Topino Lebrun were artists of talent, whose faults consisted in the use of that violent language so common to men of vivid imagination. Aréna and Demerville were ardent republicans, but they could be blamed for nothing but talking; the execution of the plot was entirely the work of the police. All four were condemned to death and executed.

Chevalier and four of his supposed accomplices, Metge, Veycer, Humbert, and Chapelle, shared the same fate.

[1] *Trial of Demerville, Aréna, etc., by the Criminal Tribunal of the Seine*, Pluviôse, Year IX.

The resemblance of the machine invented by Chevalier to the one which had produced such terrible effects was thought a conclusive proof of connivance with the attempt of the plotters, or at least of an intention to make the same use of the instrument. These nine heads had scarcely fallen, when the police captured two of the Chouans who had committed the crime; these were Carbon and Saint-Réjant. The third, Limoëlan, had succeeded in escaping. Saint-Réjant, thrown down by the explosion of his own machine, was still ill from the injuries he had received. These three had done everything themselves, and had had no accomplices among the Jacobins. With regard to the complicity of Georges himself, it was affirmed but not proved. The accusation against him was founded on a letter signed *Gédeon;* but it was by no means proved that this letter was from him; Saint-Réjant vehemently protested against this inculpation, asserting that he had ceased to have any connection with Georges after the pacification of La Vendée.

Their execution did not change the fate of the hundred and thirty transported men. The First Consul openly expressed his satisfaction at having got rid of the staff of the Jacobins. When Berlier pleaded in favour of these unfortunate men, and urged as a reason for their reprieve that it was now clearly proved they had had nothing to do with the attempt of Nivôse, the First Consul opened the *Bulletin des Lois*, and smilingly pointed out to him that by the terms of the Senatus Consultum they had not been transported for this plot, but for their previous conduct. The public learned the truth with dismay, but without indignation; the Tribunate recoiled from a censure which would have been a declaration of war, and which was no longer possible since the Senate had legalised the measure; and Fouché, instead of being ashamed of the infamous part he had played in this sanguinary deception, cynically rallied his enemies and congratulated himself on his clear-sightedness.

The session of the Year IX, the last free session which Bonaparte allowed the Legislative Assemblies to hold, had

been opened since the 1st Frimaire (December 10th, 1800). Regnier inaugurated it by presenting, in the name of the Government, a picture of the acts of the administration, and of the improvements they had accomplished or proposed to accomplish. He dwelt with emphasis upon the conciliatory intentions of the Government, upon its clement disposition towards the men of the ancient factions: 'They would not ask what a man had said or done under certain circumstances in the past; they would ask whether such a man had talent and virtue, if he were inaccessible to feelings of hatred and revenge, if he could be impartial and just.' A fine programme, but only accurate in so far as this: that the Government was disposed to pardon everything in the past, provided they were not interfered with in the future.

The first bill presented to the Legislative Assembly related to the national archives. The First Consul had already settled by a decree the new organisation which he intended to give to the archives; it only left to the Legislative Assembly the power of determining the documents that should be deposited there. He had then by his own private authority repealed the law which had given them their original organisation; he had himself decided the gravest questions connected with this public service, and only submitted to the sanction of the Legislative Body the secondary and insignificant part of the measure.

Here was a flagrant and deliberate infringement of the Legislative authority, already so limited. This debate, though apparently of trifling importance, thus involved in reality consequences which have been strangely overlooked. Independent of this general taint, the new organisation contained a defect, which invariably characterised all the acts of the Consular power: it showed Bonaparte's firm determination to be master in every way, even in the smallest things. The keeper of the archives, hitherto appointed by the Assemblies, and responsible to them alone, as would naturally be expected since his principal work consisted in preserving intact the official reports of their sittings, was placed in absolute dependence upon the Government. This precious depository was to be at

the mercy of a minister so often interested in tampering with its documents. The Tribunate understood both the disadvantages of the bill and its real object; they pointed out its defects clearly, and the Legislative Assembly threw it out. This did not, however, hinder the Government from settling the question after its own fashion.

For the rest, the desire of these two Assemblies was not to fetter but to warn Government; the opposition, even in the Tribunate, was only a small minority, and all their efforts failed to throw out a bill on the Justices of Peace, which was far more important than the one on the archives. The Justices of Peace were the only creation of the Constituent which had survived the revolutionary chaos. Their moral authority had rather increased than diminished, and the few faults with which they were chargeable were due more to the calamities of the times than to any defect in the institution itself. In the new conditions introduced by the 18th Brumaire these magistrates constituted a very valuable body, which it was most necessary to preserve; they were the last remnants of a free *régime*. Of all public functions, these alone were conferred by the direct suffrage of the citizens, and had remained popular and really independent. The Constitution of the Year VIII had not dared to touch this supreme guarantee, which was far dearer to the people than political forms of which they neither understood the meaning nor the end. Besides their function of arbitrator, and their office of protector of minors, disqualified persons, and absentees, the Justices of Peace had the very delicate prerogative of prosecuting for crimes and misdeeds of which the cognisance belonged to the correctional and criminal tribunals.

The framers of the bill, convinced that they could not abolish magistrates who had been formally consecrated by the Constitution, endeavoured to lessen the importance of their functions. They had reduced the number of judges from 6000 to about 3600, which, in many cases, placed them beyond the reach of poor applicants, and thus diminished their personal influence; in addition to this, they had introduced a change of far graver importance; the attributions

of these magistrates relative to the prosecution of crimes and misdemeanours were taken away and confided to police officers, which was depriving the accused citizen of his natural judge, elected, irremovable, independent, to place him at the mercy of an agent of the Government.

Berlier and Portalis, who presented the bill, pointed out the advantages derived in an economical point of view, and also with regard to the judges themselves, whose *functions would be simplified and made wholly paternal.* They did not wish to weaken the institution, but to raise and purify it. Portalis grew even tender. 'Let us surround the Justices of Peace,' he said, 'with love and confidence! Let us spare them odious functions.' Doubtless in principle judiciary functions ought to be irremovable, but the police prepared the sentence, they did not pronounce it: 'In civil matters the liberty of one citizen ought to be considered before the interest of another; *but in criminal matters the principle of liberty in any particular case ought to be sacrificed to the security of all.*

These last words expressed the whole mind of the legislators. In spite of their fine protestations with regard to the protecting character of the judges, the bill was unfavourably received by the Tribunate; and as soon as it met with opposition, the Government hastened to withdraw it. But it was presented again shortly after, in a slightly modified form, together with another bill on special tribunals. This subterfuge was so much the more perfidious that, though the alterations were only made on quite unimportant points, they nevertheless offered a means of conciliating inconstant and timorous minds. The law in all essential points was unchanged. Benjamin Constant opposed it in a speech admirable for clearness and good sense. He proved that the extension of the jurisdiction of the Justices of Peace by reducing their number was entirely changing the nature of their office. The conciliating *rôle* of the Justices of Peace, in order to be effectual, required before all things a thorough knowledge of localities, of customs, habits, manners. The Justice of Peace, if far removed from his jurisdiction, would no more be looked upon by his applicants as a

competent arbiter: 'He will say commonplace words on the necessity of concord and the advantages of conciliation, but he will never be able to penetrate into the secret of their souls, for he will know nothing of their connections.' He was willing, however, since they attached so much importance to it, that the functions of police should be given to special magistrates; but if, as the Government assured them, they had no intention of diminishing in any way the guarantees of the citizens, let these magistrates be elected by the people in the same manner as the Justices of Peace.

Ganilh supported him, and strongly pointed out the danger of placing the prosecution and accusation of crimes in the hands of Government. Had they already forgotten the Revolution? Were they unconscious of the harm an accuser might do, either by influencing the judge or keeping back evidence? Was it not time, at last, to put a stop to the encroachments of the executive power upon all the other powers? Had not the Constitution given it enough? The proposed law would render possible a system of anticipatory imprisonment for from two to three months; did not such a measure contain a threat against individual security? The speakers who followed him dwelt upon the blow which would be dealt to the Jury of Accusation if they were reduced to decide from written proceedings instead of oral inquiry; they recalled the expression of Thouret in the Constituent: 'With written evidence you have still judges, but you have no longer any jury.' In spite of these judicious warnings, the bill passed in the Tribunate as well as in the Legislative Assembly, and the institution of Justices of Peace, which might have been so powerful and so beneficial, maintained a languishing existence corresponding to its subaltern functions. It never rose after the blow which had been dealt to it.

The Government had just presented to the Assemblies its celebrated law on special tribunals, and public opinion in spite of its usual torpor was keenly agitated. This was in fact no longer political power usurping judiciary power, it was arbitrary power openly throwing off the mask and

henceforward threatening every life and position. It has been supposed that this fatal law, which was worthy of the worst days of the Terror, had its origin in the burst of indignation caused by the crime of Nivôse; it had not even this pretext for it, for it was announced to the Tribunate more than a fortnight before the explosion of the infernal machine. Though ostensibly made for the brigands who were desolating the provinces, it in reality brought within its reach all citizens, from the vagueness of its definitions. It permitted the Government to substitute for ordinary justice, whenever it pleased, tribunals composed of three judges, members of the criminal court, three officers, and two assessors chosen by the First Consul, which of course insured a majority of five votes for the Government. These tribunals were competent for all crimes and misdemeanours involving *peines infamantes*, for arson, coining of false money, highway robbery, *of threats against purchasers of national property*, *bribery*, *tampering with soldiers*, *and seditious assemblies.* They were to continue to exist till two years after a *general peace.* Lastly, during all this time the Government was to have power to exile all persons whose presence appeared dangerous.

It was not against robbery, then, that they were legislating: thanks to the indefinite wording of some of the clauses of the bill, the competence of these tribunals was almost unlimited. The law was, in fact, nothing less than the right given to the Government of dispensing whenever it pleased with the forms and guarantees of ordinary justice. It was so much the less excusable on the part of the Government to act in this way, that when the debate was opened they had just struck their political enemies by an extra-legal measure against which neither public opinion nor the opposition could raise a single complaint, and that they possessed already everything needed for the suppression of brigandage in the military commissions which accompanied the flying columns, passing summary judgment on the culprits—a terrible weapon, more than sufficient for repression.

This law at length opened the eyes of all optimists to

the coarse truth of affairs: they could no longer retain their illusions; this was what in all times had been termed tyranny. The emotion produced by it was deep and universal. Obscure and quiet men like Desrenaudes, who had hitherto supported the Government, declared for the first time that they should vote against it. Seeing this strong opposition, the First Consul withdrew the measure relating to exile. The bill was defended in the Tribunate by Duveyrier, who was glad of an opportunity of atoning for his momentary rashness. But all those who were remarkable in this Assembly for talent, character, or moderation, distinguished themselves by opposing it. Isnard, the last remnant of the Girondins, protested in the name of the memory of that generous party. Benjamin Constant unmasked with his clear and acute criticisms the intentions of the bill. If the object of the proposed law was the suppression of theft and brigandage, he was ready to give it his full support, but with the vague terms of its clauses, who could flatter himself that he was beyond its reach? What meeting might not be termed seditious? Where did the tampering with soldiers begin? What were plots? Besides, the law was a flagrant derogation of the principles of irremovability and non-retroaction. It was presented, it was true, as an exceptional measure, but it must soon be generalised: 'How, in fact, would prefects be satisfied with ordinary police when they could have police extraordinary?' Further, supposing even that circumstances offered an excuse (which they did not), exceptional justice must of necessity be iniquitous, for, added he, in his peculiarly rapid and striking manner, 'the abridgment of forms is a punishment; to subject the accused to this punishment is to punish him before he is condemned.'

Then, passing on to political considerations, he proceeded to show the similarity of this measure to all the laws of Public Safety, which the Revolution had created, and which the Government so indignantly stigmatised while imitating them. 'It has been said in support of this bill that the maintenance of public order would sometimes be endangered by the Constitution if it were too inflexible,

The argument is old. If I did not wish to avoid comparisons which are far from my thoughts, I would undertake to show that in each sitting of the Assemblies which have preceded us orators have been heard proclaiming from the tribune that it was necessary to violate the Constitution in order to defend it, that the Constitution was being destroyed by the Constitution. . . . I say that similar reasons were urged on behalf of the laws against the priests, the laws against the nobles, and that host of special laws ostensibly framed for the maintenance of Constitutions which they utterly destroyed.'

Jean Debry, formerly a member of the committees of the Convention, admitted the justice of Benjamin Constant's objections by the very manner in which he replied to them. He defended revolutionary measures, forgetting that these measures had not even the excuse of being employed in the service of the Revolution; he appealed to circumstances, necessity, the rights of society over its members, and all the worn-out sophisms of the school of Public Safety. Chazal compared the proposed law to the edict of 1670, which had organised the jurisdiction of provosts, and proved that the new law was far more arbitrary and more rigorous than the old one, so justly detested even under an absolute *régime*. Daunou followed him and riveted the attention of his hearers by the simplicity and suppressed emotion of his speech; he confined his arguments to one point, endeavouring to prove that the bill, being unconstitutional, ought to be thrown out for this reason alone. If the Constitution were violated on a single point, it would cease to exist; nothing was stable in the State. It was proposed that judiciary forms should be suppressed, and in what questions? in political questions, that is to say, in those in which their maintenance was most necessary. 'State crime,' said he, 'however justifiable the terror which it inspires, and precisely on account of the rigorous attention it demands, is under all circumstances the one in the prosecution of which it is unadvisable to proceed with military rapidity. If the plots are real, it is of the highest importance to the Government that the conclusiveness of

the evidence should be clear to all, that it should leave no room for doubt; if no plots exist but those of informers and judges against innocent victims . . . citizen tribunes, I stop; I recollect Bailly, Vergniaud, Thouret, Malesherbes, accused, condemned, immolated, with that rapidity which we are asked to revive.'

Chenier opposed the suppression of juries: 'What,' he exclaimed, 'you are willing to preserve the jury for slight offences and you abolish it for capital crimes?' Guinguené pointed out with great force and eloquence the contradiction in which the Government fell in boasting of having re-established order in France, when they were demanding so formidable a weapon: 'We were told that the Revolution was finished; that all party faction was extinct; the strength of a Government which only needed to be just was extolled; and yet this proposed law is stamped with all the signs and indications of revolutionary times. It supposes the existence of seditious and factious persons whom common law cannot reach, it proclaims, in short, the weakness of the Government in the most grievous and unequivocal manner.'

The supporters of the bill, completely defeated, were compelled to stammer with Caillemer, 'that an honest man was always safe under the most terrible laws, if the judges were not the instruments of passion.' But in spite of this paltry defence, and in spite of the noble and courageous efforts of the opponents, the Tribunate, partly bought, partly intimidated, passed the bill by a majority of forty-nine against forty-one. They had still courage enough to throw out a bill on the archives or on criminal proceedings, but their independence did not extend further.

Français de Nantes, who defended the law on special tribunals as Orator of the Council of State, strove less to answer the objections to it than to rail against those who had dared to raise them, He assailed them with unprecedented violence. The tone of his speech alone indicated clearly enough that his language contained something more than the expression of a personal sentiment, and certain recriminations, especially those which referred to

metaphysics and metaphysicians, were tantamount to the signature of the First Consul. They alone had created the clouds in which the question was enveloped. The bill had none of the ambiguity with which it was charged, none but robbers need be alarmed at it. The whole nation had complained of the powerlessness of the laws; were they to be refused satisfaction in order to please a few inconsistent men who had not even the excuse of strong conviction, 'for they did not believe half what they affirmed with so much audacity? . . . The world at large,' he added, 'might take these declamations for an opposition of some strength, but it would be a gross error!'

It was scarcely possible to have any doubt with regard to the instigator of this speech, for the day on which Guinguené had spoken against the law Bonaparte had publicly given vent to his irritation in terms which a man only permits himself to use to an enemy whom he has resolved to ruin at any price. On receiving a deputation from the Senate, he exclaimed: 'Guinguené has given us an ass's kick! There are twelve or fifteen metaphysicians there, scarce worth throwing into the river. It is so much vermin that I have got in my clothes; but they shall not attack me as they did Louis XVI.; no, I will not suffer it!' It had already been remarked that when the authorities had publicly congratulated him on the conclusion of the treaty of Lunéville, he had not replied a single word to the orator of the Tribunate, and that, in his reply to the Legislative Body, he had introduced a barely-disguised censure for what he called 'the inconsiderate attacks of some men.' In spite of his well-known feelings, the attack of Français de Nantes against the Tribunate met with universal disapprobation even in official circles, and was condemned as a breach of decorum and dignity. The First Consul vindicated him with a passion which plainly showed that it was he who had suggested the speech; he flew into a fury with his colleagues Cambacérès and Lebrun, who regarded it as untimely and injurious: 'We must show,' he said, 'that we feel insults, and that we will not put up with them.' He had already begun to regard as an insult all control

exercised over his actions. The feeble murmur of public opinion, of which the Tribunate sent him back the faint echo with so much consideration for his glory, was more intolerable to him than open hostility. Seeing that menace and intimidation did not succeed, he tried flattery; he even appealed to scruples of devotion to the public good. Why did not the Tribunes, instead of making an opposition in the Assembly at the risk of creating a division among the public authorities, come to him like his Councillors of State, and make known their objections to him in his cabinet, *en famille?* Every one knew what perfect liberty of discussion and even of criticism he allowed to the Council of State. I have already explained to what extent he tolerated this liberty; he was there like the god, *cuncta supercilio movens.* Moreover, Bonaparte, after listening to the Council of State, acted after his own fashion; for two things were wanting in these discussions, without which an Assembly is valueless—publicity and efficacy! It was these two things, the indispensable basis of all legislative authority, which Bonaparte wanted to suppress in the discussions of the Tribunate.

The bill for regulating the mode of drawing up and renewing the lists of notability revealed to what extent the electoral system created by the Constitution of the Year VIII was unsound, artificial, and impossible. This law, the slow result of the lucubrations of the Council of State, was full of complications and difficulties, in the labyrinth of which the framers themselves owned that they were lost. The simple and true conditions of the nature of things are not evaded with impunity. The efforts to substitute a vain appearance for the direct suffrage of the citizens had produced this monstrous result: that, as the notables comprised in the Communal list of the arrondissement had to elect a tenth from among them to form the Departmental list, it followed that in the large towns each bulletin would contain as many *as eight hundred names.* This result was so strikingly absurd that, on the observations of Duchesnes and Desmeuniers, the Government hastened to modify Article 64 of the bill, authorising the Communal elector

only to elect the tenth of the *Communal series* of which he formed part.

But in spite of the eagerness with which the Government adopted other amendments, as if to screen as quickly as possible this miserable bill from the observation of the public, the tendency shown in every clause to encroach on the national sovereignty was so evident, that some of the speakers openly attacked the principle of the law, although it had received the sanction of the Constitution.

It was, in fact, a piece of true cynicism to give the name of electoral system to a *régime* which, limiting the function of election to the nomination of 500,000 notables of the Communes, 50,000 notables of the Departments, and lastly, 5000 national notables, only left in the place of electoral rights a long list of *eligibility*, from which the Government could choose its creatures. It was very naturally remarked that all the nominations would be made by a very small minority, and that the system contained all the elements of a real order of patricians—but patricians passive and submissive, very inferior to the ancient nobility, who at least were independent. The bill, however, passed the Tribunate. Savoie-Rollin, who defended it before the Legislative Assembly, alleged a reason for passing it, that 'though there were certain minor difficulties attached to it, the fact that the solution of these difficulties was entrusted to the prefects and sub-prefects ought to dispel all uneasiness with regard to them.' This argument plainly expresses the claims of the Government to be regarded as Providence. They wished to be trusted with everything, even with the power of voting if necessary for the nation. Rœderer wound up the defence of the law by pointing out the great difference between patricians and notables, who had neither hereditary rights nor privileges. The system, in fact, contained nothing that would have elevated them by giving them power and independence. They were only the inert supernumeraries of a vast body of functionaries. 'It was,' said Rœderer, 'the last blow dealt to the ancient nobility, and an obstacle to the formation of a new one. It had nothing in common with *the titles of Count, Duke,*

Marquis, which for so many centuries indicated a degrading feudal power.'[1] Count Rœderer could shortly after have contradicted the incautious assertions of citizen Rœderer.

The bill for fixing the taxes of Year X met with more determined opposition. In this bill the Government formally violated the Constitution, as they always did without hesitation whenever the Constitution fettered them. Instead of conforming to the Articles 45 and 57, which laid down that the receipts and expenditure should be fixed by an annual law, they proposed to delay for a year the inspection of expenditure of the Year IX, and presented a budget in which the receipts alone were given. With this system, the expenses of a service were only submitted to the examination of the Legislative Body during the course of another service, and after the money was spent and criticism was useless. This was rendering completely illusory the right of control, which formed the only prerogative left to Legislative authority. The Government speakers did not deny that this course was a violation of the Constitution; but they sheltered themselves under the exceptional circumstances of the times, and pleaded that the country being on a war footing it was impossible to make an estimate, even approximative, of the expenditure. The orators of the Tribunate admitted the objection, and consented to make allowances for circumstances; but by voting the budget for war as large as possible, was there not a simple means of limiting the expenditure in the other branches of service? And they proposed, as a very reasonable solution of the problem, the usual division between ordinary funds and extraordinary funds. In presenting a regular budget for that part of the administration for which the expenditure could be immediately fixed, and leaving the others subject to a rectification by means of supplementary funds, the right of the Legislative Assembly would have been preserved, and some control retained over a large portion of the public services. But this was precisely the point which the Consular Government wished to avoid at any price. It protested in the name of the *unity of the budget*, which

[1] *Archives Parlementaires.*

would be for ever destroyed if this system were adopted; besides, the proposed measure was only a temporary one; as soon as the present crisis was past, the Government would hasten to return to true principles. The Tribune Laussat replied, with a perspicacity which did honour to his judgment, that the temporary measure could not fail to become a perpetual one, because the facilities it offered were too great to be ever abandoned. This is just what happened: the exception became the rule, and lasted as long as the Empire itself. Bailleul, though he voted for the law, could not refrain from remarking that the last guarantee of the people was destroyed.

In spite of these just arguments, the Tribunate, wishing to give proof of its good-will, and to show the Government its appreciation of the improvement in the administration of the finances, voted for the delay asked for, but took care to state, through the medium of its reporter Chassiron, that the law had only been adopted as a temporary measure. They showed more opposition to a bill relating to the definite adjustment of the public debt. This bill, suggested chiefly by the sudden rise in the funds since the firm establishment of the Consular Government, consisted principally in substituting the resources thus offered for the depreciated securities with which the creditors of the State had hitherto been paid. The principle was excellent, but it was far from being equitably carried out. There were debts of about 90,000,000 for different contracts made by the Directory during the Years V, VI, and VII. An early clause of the bill provided a permanent payment of 2,700,000 francs or three per cent for these creditors, which at the current price of the public funds was to diminish their capital by two-thirds. In justification of this partial bankruptcy towards the creditors, the State alleged the fraudulent character of some of the contracts; but, as Benjamin Constant remarked in the discussion, if the terms were onerous, it was because the State was notorious for not keeping its engagements, and that any transaction with it was necessarily speculative. Besides, a great number of these contracts had originated in requisitions which fell on artisans, manufacturers, agricul-

turists, men who were strangers to all speculation, and whose good faith was above suspicion. The liquidation confounded the innocent with the guilty, the poor with the rich. This injustice was so much the more striking that, by another clause of the bill, the Government treated its own creditors much more favourably than those of the Directory, though their debts were of precisely the same nature, and paid them in full, by the creation of 1,000,000 of *rentes*, and the alienation of national property to the value of 30,000,000.

It now remained to regulate the public debt proper, that is to say, that part of the debt left by the bankruptcy of the Directory. A third of this remainder of the debt had been inscribed in the Great Book; it was this portion which was called the *Consolidated Third*, but only a part of this third had been inscribed; the uninscribed remainder was termed the *Provisional Third.* Then there were the unconsolidated two-thirds, called the *Mobilised Two-thirds*, which were extremely depreciated and set apart for the payment of the national domains. It was proposed to inscribe 30,000,000 of the *Provisional Third*, but to postpone the payment of the interest for two years, and to convert the *Mobilised Two-thirds* into *Consolidated Thirds*, reducing them to a twentieth of their nominal value, which represented exactly enough the depreciation they had suffered. A latter clause of the bill appropriated 120,000,000 of the national property to the fund for public instruction, 40,000,000 for the support of the Invalides, and 70,000,000 to a sinking fund for lessening the public debt.

Necessity was an excuse for some of these measures, which were the natural consequence of the defective financial management of the preceding *régime;* others caused the ruin of many worthy and respectable creditors, who were confounded with stock-jobbers and peculators; all were radically wrong, because they were arbitrary. The opposition, in wishing to force the Government to make a distinction between just debts and those of a doubtful character, did not intend to impose upon the State sacrifices beyond its strength, since according to their calculations

the interest of the public debt ought not to go beyond from 107,000,000 to 110,000,000, which was not more than a fifth of the sum annually paid by England; but they considered that this proof of justice and integrity was indispensable to the complete re-establishment of order in the finances; they thought that the State, being both judge and party in this matter, ought to act in accordance with fixed principles, and not for its own convenience merely; in short, they were convinced of the good effect of imposing this rule on the Government by Legislative control. Benjamin Constant and Desrenaudes urged these various objections in so forcible and so lucid a manner, that the bill on the finances was thrown out in the Tribunate; but the Legislative Body passed it by a large majority.

The Legislative power had then, after all, only rejected two bills of secondary importance, and in both cases because they were unable to amend them: it was impossible to soften them without rendering them powerless. But it was not the moderate use they made of it which was obnoxious, it was the right itself. What the First Consul abhorred was not so much the control, in reality very slight, which they exercised over his acts, as the possibility of rendering this control serious. His sole anxiety was now to deprive the Legislative Body of the prerogative which the Constitution had left to it, and he often employed the meanest subterfuges in order to attain this end. It was thus that he wanted to change the right of ratifying treaties, which devolved on the Legislators, into a simple act of registering, under pretence that the Constitution had not adopted the word ratification; it only said, 'that the treaties should be proposed, discussed, decreed, and promulgated, like the laws.' This invariable habit of aiming at his own private interest in everything, of never considering the acts either of the Government or of the great bodies of the State but with regard to the increase of power which they would give to the First Consul, in the end annihilated the shadow of life and independence in the authorities whose office it was to check him. Thus the most salutary

measures were corrupted, by transforming them into means of domination.

General Bonaparte had always shown a natural taste for order and regularity in administration; this taste was in itself a precious boon to a country in the state in which the negligence of the Directory had left it; but the nation had too often opportunities of recognising that, instead of emanating from a sincere sentiment of the needs of the people, it had its spring in his love of power, which often clashed with the interest of the public. Such was the secret of the favour with which the laws on the finances had treated one class of creditors to the detriment of others; such was also that of the preference given to certain great public works over others of truer utility, but less likely to attract attention or serve his ambitious schemes. Our country roads were in a wretched state, but very little was done to improve them; on the other hand no expense was spared and wide publicity given to the construction of the magnificent road of the Simplon, the sign and instrument of our domination in Italy; and, in order to insure its possession to France, negotiations were entered into with Switzerland for the cession of the Valais.[1] A monastery was established on Mont Cenis, similar to that of Mont Saint-Bernard; but this asylum was only built to mask the construction of barracks. Chaptal and Fourcroy were successively employed in working out a plan for reform in public instruction; but the first condition imposed upon them was the foundation of 6000 scholarships, not open to competition, but in the gift of the First Consul.

Some of these acts, however, merit unreserved approbation: such are the decree which insured the completion of the Canal of Saint-Quentin, which had for a long time remained in an unfinished state; another which authorised the opening of an exhibition of the products of French trade and manufactures:[2] an excellent measure, though marred in some respects by too many regulations, but which could bear but little fruit under a purely military *régime;*

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, February 13th, 1801.
[2] *Bulletin des lois*, arrêté du 4 Mars 1801.

lastly, one which referred the Civil Code for examination to the tribunals of appeal and the Court of Cassation. This Code, entrusted towards the end of the Year VIII to a committee composed of eminent lawyers, Tronchet, Portalis, Malleville, Bigot de Préameneu, and now completed, was in reality the result of the previous labours of the Constituent and the Convention; it was about to be examined by all the most enlightened jurisconsults of France; it was then to be presented with their observations to a Council of State, who were to give a final decision; and it was only in this last form, after having passed through this long series of successive trials, that it was to be referred to the Legislative Body to receive their sanction. We see by this what may be understood by the title so often applied to Napoleon of *Author of the Civil Code.* The Code was almost finished before he took his part in the discussions of the Council of State, whose amendments were by no means desirable. I will point out later in what way the good or evil influence of the First Consul was exercised on this collective work.

Since the conclusion of the treaty of Lunéville, the foreign policy of the First Consul had but one aim, that of humbling England; and for the attainment of this end he was now possessed of means more powerful than the undignified abuse which he lavished on her in all his public speeches and in the columns of the *Moniteur.* The defeat of Austria at Hohenlinden, the revival of the League of Neutrals under the auspices of Paul I., had not only isolated England, but had turned against her the coalition which she had so long armed against us. Naples and Portugal, themselves on the point of yielding, were the only allies left her in Europe, except Turkey who was almost as powerless. Murat was marching upon Naples; Gouvion Saint-Cyr was preparing to enter Spain with 25,000 men in order to operate his junction with the Prince of the Peace and subdue Portugal. The treaty of Lunéville, which decided that the throne of Tuscany should be erected in favour of the Infant of Parma, had disclosed the terms of the contract which insured us the co-operation of Spain; but what it had not

revealed was that Bonaparte had still more stimulated the zeal of this Power, by intimating that the throne of Tuscany might possibly be changed into a throne of Naples[1]—a promise, however, which he knew he could not keep, on account of his engagements towards Russia.

Murat had only to show himself on the frontier to put down all resistance. The king of Naples submitted to the will of the conqueror, engaged to shut his ports to the English, to give us his part of the island of Elba, of which we already possessed one-half as conquerors of Tuscany, and to receive and maintain in the Gulf of Tarento a division of 15,000 French, who were to reinforce the army of Egypt. Whilst England lost this ally, so precious to her for naval purposes, she saw herself threatened in the North by the imminent aggression of the League of Neutrals, composed of the united naval forces of Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia; she was shut out in the South from almost all the ports of the Mediterranean; and she was constantly harassed on the Western coast of Europe by the naval expeditions which the First Consul organised against her at Brest under Ganteaume, at Rochefort under Bruix, in Spain under Dumanoir, and even as far as Holland. These forces, ostensibly prepared against Ireland, India, and Brazil, were all in reality bound for the same country, Egypt, which Bonaparte determined to save at any price. England had then at the same time an immense line of coast to watch, to blockade, and the stratagems of very skilful mariners to baffle; but being on the point of landing an army in Egypt herself, and attaching more importance to the destruction of this conquest than we did to its preservation, she kept an eye on our preparations with indefatigable vigilance. Her squadrons, even when inferior in number, showed a sentiment of their superiority which dismayed our best men.

To the dangers occasioned by this formidable naval coalition were added those which arose from a crisis at home of the gravest nature. Although the resources of England had been nearly doubled since the commencement of the war, owing to an activity which had concentrated in

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, February 4, 1801.

her hands all the commerce of Europe, the people were suffering from a frightful famine caused by bad harvests; and the Ministry which Pitt had led for so many years with indomitable energy seemed to break down under the weight of the calamities which he had let loose. Pitt had just retired from office under circumstances of the most serious character for the future of his country (February 4, 1801). This act was attributed by many persons to a secret desire to avoid the responsibility of events which he was no longer able to meet, although he had openly given as a reason for his retiring the opposition of the king to the admission of Catholics into Parliament and the higher offices of the State. This supposition was, however, erroneous. Never had Pitt shown more resolution, more confidence in the strength and greatness of his country; never had he met with greater vigour the attacks of his powerful adversaries of the Opposition; and we may add, that he was never greater than in this voluntary surrender of power. To attribute his resignation to want of faith, even momentary, in the fortune of his country, would be completely to misunderstand the character of the man. He had, on the contrary, so firm a belief in it, that he never doubted that his country could do without him. Pitt was not a man to abandon his post in time of danger. His memory is above the reach of such an imputation; and now that more light has been thrown on these events, the accusation has not even a pretext. It was not from weakness, but under the influence of the noblest scruples, that Pitt abdicated the kind of dictatorship which he held far more by the will of his country than by any preference of George III. Pitt had obtained in the previous year the assistance of the Catholics in one of the most important objects of his policy, the union of Ireland, that is to say, the union of the Irish Parliament to that of England and Scotland. He had resolved to raise this unhappy country from its state of servitude by binding it to England by stronger ties than those of force. He had not shrunk from undertaking that great act of reparation. He had risen above the prejudices of his countrymen; he had understood that a union, translated in beneficent acts, would

be the surest defence against the danger of our descents on Ireland, and the still greater one of the terrible Irish insurrections.

But this happy result could not be obtained without the support of the Catholics, to whom hopes were held out that in return the civil and political disabilities which oppressed them should be abolished. Although Pitt knew perfectly well that in the fulfilment of this promise, which was not a formal engagement, he would meet with great obstacles in the timidity and obstinacy of the king, yet he believed that by acting with care and deliberation he should be able to succeed; but the treason of one of his colleagues (Lord Loughborough [1]) lost everything, and through a premature disclosure foiled his attempts in overcoming the resistance of the king, who considered the admission of Catholics to offices of State as incompatible with his Coronation Oath. Pitt had had too many proofs of his ascendency over the king not to have the right to believe that on this occasion he should attain his object; there is, therefore, no more justice in charging him with want of foresight, than in complaining that he chose to fulfil engagements which arose out of his position rather than from the circumstances in which the country was placed. The Union, such as Pitt had conceived it—that is to say, in connection with emancipation—was not for England a secondary question, as our historians have so lightly asserted: it was a subject of the highest importance,[2] and it was perfectly natural that Pitt should retire when he was defeated on a point which mutilated and dishonoured his work.

It is so far from true that Pitt quitted the Ministry because his courage was not equal to the situation,[3] that, less than a month after his resignation—considering that, for a time, he had fulfilled his engagements towards the

[1] Lord Stanhope: *William Pitt and his Time.*

[2] Macaulay speaks of Pitt's bill in these terms: 'It is only justice to his memory to say, that this design was so grand, so simple, so equitable and humane, that it alone would suffice to insure him a high rank among statesmen.'—*Biographical Essays.*

[3] Thiers: *History of the Consulate and the Empire.*

Catholics, both by the efforts he had just made in their favour and by the enormous increase of difficulties in which the king's madness placed both the Government and the country—he sanctioned propositions which were privately made to Addington, his own appointed successor, to induce him to resign. But Addington would not listen to these proposals, and continued to hold office with the imperturbable confidence of mediocrity. The situation of the country was in reality less alarming than it at first sight appeared, because the nation had never at any time shown more reliance on its own resources. The people bore without difficulty the heavy taxes which the war imposed on them, and, what was more astonishing still, Pitt had found no opposition whatever in Parliament to his last budget. The immense increase in the industrial prosperity of England triumphantly refuted the predictions of her enemies as well as the complaints of alarmists. As the effect of every fresh declaration of war on the Continent had been to diminish competition in the great market of the world, and throw into her hands the navy and colonies of her adversaries, the English had begun to look upon the loan of millions and the subsidies as so much premium paid for the development of their own resources. 'The late Cabinet,' said Pitt, a short time after in a speech of May 18th, 'has found means, in the midst of its constant checks, to deprive our enemies of almost all their colonial possessions, to destroy almost all their maritime forces, to rob them of their commerce and to appropriate it to ourselves; at the same time to maintain the security of our possessions at all points of the globe.' This justification was strictly true.

The English navy was at that time a match for the united naval forces of the rest of the world. England, therefore, instead of experiencing terror, as has been so often asserted, at the sight of the League of Neutrals, showed almost eagerness to commence hostilities. It was with a light heart and without any doubt as to the issue of the battle, that Nelson sailed rapidly for the Baltic, to go and station himself in the very centre of the enemies' fleet, in order to deal a blow at the very heart of the maritime

coalition, and prevent them from uniting. As early as the end of March (1801) this incomparable sailor, already the legendary hero of the new generation of seamen, was on the coast of Denmark with the aged Parker, whom the Admiralty had given him for Commander-in-Chief, laughing at the impression produced on the admiral 'by the dark nights and sheets of ice in the Baltic.' The Russian fleet was still frozen in, in the port of Revel, and neither Sweden nor Denmark had finished their preparations. The 30th of March, Nelson passed through the Sound by keeping close to the Swedish coast, which was not guarded; the 2d of April he appeared before Copenhagen. The Danish Government, rather reluctantly drawn into the League by fear of Russia, her near neighbour, and deprived of foreign aid by the rapidity of Nelson's operations, had concentrated at Copenhagen all the means of defence which they could dispose of; so that the natural difficulties of entrance into the port, combined with works of great strength, rendered the approaches formidable. The town was only accessible at one weak point, the south side of the King's Channel;[1] and this point was protected by a line of defence formed of old ships mounted with more than 600 guns. Nelson had no ill will towards Denmark, her navy was too small to give umbrage to England, but he was anxious to detach her from the coalition, so that the passages of the Sound might not be left in the hands of the enemy in the event of a forced retreat. With twelve line-of-battle ships, taken from Parker's fleet, he led the way with his usual boldness through the King's Channel, and took up his station nearly opposite the Danish vessels amidst a heavy fire, reckoning according to his custom neither on stratagem nor a superiority of force, but on an invincible will which nothing could shake, and on that marvellous genius which illuminated him in the midst of danger. The stranding of three of his vessels had broken his line, and prevented him from obtaining all the success he had hoped.[2] The resistance was such as might have been expected from the small

[1] Jurien de la Gravière: *Guerres maritimes sous le Consulat et l'Empire.* [2] Nelson's report to the Admiralty.

nation who had held so high a place in the military history of Europe. At one time Parker, who was watching the combat from a distance, thought everything was lost and hoisted the signal of recall. Then Nelson, calling to witness one of his officers, and putting the glass to his blind eye, exclaimed, 'Now, damn me if I obey such an order! Upon my soul, I do not see the signal! Nail mine to the mast for close action.'[1] After four hours and a half of fierce fighting, Nelson's ships were for the most part dismasted and riddled with shot; but the Danish line of defence was almost entirely destroyed, and the town was open. Negotiations were begun, and Nelson, who had his reasons for not abusing victory, contented himself with imposing on the Danes a suspension of arms for fourteen weeks, which in his eyes was equivalent to a secession from the League of the Neutrals (April 9, 1801). The Danish Government had equally good reasons for accepting the terms. They had just learned that Paul I. had been assassinated in the night between the 23d and 24th of March, and hastened to conclude the armistice before the news of his death should reach the English.

This dramatic event took Europe by surprise; and more than any other power, England, who was supposed to gain by it. It could not, however, have caused astonishment to any one who was aware of the increasing madness of this sovereign, and was acquainted with the habits and character of his subjects. Assassination was, as Talleyrand wittily observed, the usual mode of dismissal in Russia. The insanity of Paul I. had grown to such an extent during the last years of his life, that it was not surprising to find those whose lives were endangered by it meditate recourse to this terrible remedy. Regicide has at all times been the natural corrective of tyranny; and if it is so deeply implanted in Russia, it is because it has been fostered in that country by despotism itself. Paul had become intolerable even to those who shared his arbitrary power: he was so whimsical, so changeable, so irritable even in the midst of his caprices, that no one was safe in his presence. To the

[1] Robert Southey: *Life of Nelson.*

discontent created by an autocracy equally narrow and violent, vexatious and cruel, were added the evils produced by the suspension of commerce with England and the humiliation of a foreign policy which had become the jest of Europe. Without being initiated in the secrets of diplomacy, his subjects instinctively felt that a sovereign so inconsistent, so chimerical, and so puerile in his reforms at home, could not fail in spite of his power to be the sport of other governments abroad; and in this they were not deceived, for Bonaparte, for one, had only been so free in giving fine promises because he never intended to keep them. Everything then conspired together for his ruin; and although his death was the work of a palace plot, organised by men who forfeited his life to save their own, we may say that his death-warrant had been pronounced by the nation at large more out of shame than weariness of such a reign. His insanity was, moreover, no longer a secret; a popular caricature represented him holding in his right hand a paper with the word *order;* in his left hand, another with the word *counter order;* and on his forehead was written *disorder.* Nor did Pahlen, General Béningsen, and Count Panin, who were the chiefs of the plot, when they had rid their country of this dangerous maniac, experience the least hesitation in assuming the responsibility of the act, not only before history, but before Alexander himself, to whom they offered the crown from their hands still stained with the blood of his father.

When Talleyrand carried the news of Paul's death to Malmaison, Bonaparte immediately perceived the effect it would produce on his own policy, and exclaimed with anger: 'The English missed me on the 3d Nivôse at Paris, but they have not missed me at St. Petersburg!' Before he had received any information with regard to the event and its causes, he offered through the columns of the *Moniteur* this bitter insult to the English Government: 'Paul I. died in the night between the 24th and 25th of March. . . . The English squadron passed through the Sound on the 31st. History will show the connection between these two events!' He repeats this assertion in

his *Mémoires*, without offering in support of so grave an imputation any other proof than the relations of Lord Whitworth, then ambassador to the court of Russia, with the principal conspirators, and his connection with the sister of the Soubows. It has moreover been invariably stated after him that the suspicion was justifiable, because England was the only power which could profit by the event.

History, whose testimony the *Moniteur* invoked so loudly, has left nothing to justify these assertions. Lord Whitworth knew nothing of the conspiracy, and his personal character defies calumny; the English Cabinet did not expect Paul's death; Pahlen, the principal leader in the plot, was and always remained unfriendly to English influence; Nelson, so far from rejoicing at the event, was exceedingly annoyed, because it obliged him to abandon all hopes of destroying the Russian navy, which had been the chief aim of his expedition to the Baltic; lastly, it was absurd to assert that England was the only Power interested in the event, for there was a Power much more directly interested in it, and there is no need of going so far to seek it—it was Russia herself.

The death of Paul I. was a death-blow to the League of the Neutrals. There was nothing to regret in the breaking up of this League, for though nominally formed in the defence of perfectly right principles, it in reality served the cause of a double despotism, already menacing to Europe—I mean the autocracy of Paul and the conquering Cæsarism of Bonaparte. No one would now think of defending the overbearing superiority which England at that time assumed on the seas; but the triumph of this double despotism was a far more serious danger for European nations than any abuse of the right of searching vessels. From the time that Bonaparte unmasked his system of conquest and his despotic designs, all who took up arms against him were fighting for the independence of Europe. The war which England was waging against us, so iniquitous in the beginning, had become, thanks to our aggressive policy, a guarantee and a protection to small states. It was this that the

Neutrals failed to see, so fully convinced were they of the justice of their indignation and the equity of their cause. Prejudiced in favour of a policy which damaged them by the very justice of their grievances, it was difficult for them to foresee that their League was only the first step towards the Continental blockade.

We can only conjecture what would have been the ulterior development of the Franco-Russian alliance if Paul had lived. It is certain, however, that the concessions and promises which the First Consul made him as freely as promises to a child who must be appeased, were nothing more than a diplomatic play calculated to keep up his frenzy. The more credulous and the deeper were Paul's illusions, the greater would have been his deception, and the more terrible the anger of this *Jupiter tonans* on finding himself duped by his ally. This friendship, then, of which Bonaparte boasted so loudly, only served present interests, while it endangered those of the future; for there is no doubt that, as soon as the rupture took place, the coalition would have been formed once more around Paul.

The First Consul had for a long time contemplated the annexation of Piedmont to France; but knowing Paul's enthusiasm for the cause of legitimate kings, he had gone so far as to write to M. de Saint-Marsan, 'That, out of friendship for Russia, he was disposed to do something for the king of Sardinia.'[1] But directly he hears of Paul's death, everything changes, and Bonaparte issues a decree which definitely annexes Piedmont, giving it, it is true, for a time the administration of a French department (April 12, 1801). However, as he did not wish to make the motive for so sudden a change too apparent, the decree was dated ten days later; and if Kalitschef, the Russian ambassador, should take into his head to complain of this conduct, he would reply, said Bonaparte, 'That the First Consul had felt indignant at the king of Sardinia's want of respect for him—that he had lost all patience—that, moreover, nothing was lost nor decided.' And if Lucchesini should protest in the name of Prussia, he would reply that

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, March 18, 1801.

'The French Government did not discuss the affairs of Italy with the king of Prussia.'[1]

At the same time Duroc started for St. Petersburg, charged with a confidential mission. He arrived there in time to be present at the conclusion of peace between England and Russia. Such was the end of the League of the Neutrals and the Franco-Russian Alliance.

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, April 13, 1801.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRELIMINARIES OF LONDON— THE CONCORDAT

Our twofold military and diplomatic successes of Hohenlinden and Lunéville had disposed the English Cabinet to peace; the victory of Nelson in the Baltic, the death of Paul I., the breaking up of the League of Neutrals, exercised a similar influence on the inclinations of the First Consul. Both sides had arrived at such a degree of weariness that they were glad to negotiate, and both had acquired sufficient glory to make concessions without dishonour. We had an agent in London, appointed for the exchange of prisoners; this was M. Otto, a skilful and experienced diplomatist. It was to him that Lord Hawkesbury, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Addington Cabinet, made the first propositions. As early as the 21st of March (1801), feeling the necessity of preparing the way in advance, and before he had any news of Nelson's expedition against the Neutrals, he informed Otto that if France would listen to propositions of peace His Britannic Majesty was ready to send a plenipotentiary to Paris or to any other place to discuss the conditions. In reply to this step, the French Government, after fruitless endeavours to make England adopt their former proposition of a naval armistice, authorised Otto to open conferences in London, to determine beforehand the principal bases of peace. They began again, then, to talk of peace, but at the same time war was carried on as vigorously as ever, so that the hardest of the difficulties to solve should be decided by force of arms. From the commencement of the discussion, and as soon as ever their mutual

claims were made known, the obstacles to an understanding were felt to be so great that both sides accepted a kind of tacit agreement to prolong the negotiations till accomplished fact should decide the principal questions in dispute.

France, as well as England, was in fact preparing to deal two great blows from which they expected decisive results. The Addington Ministry, more fortunate in the war than the previous Cabinet, had decided on carrying out Pitt's plan of landing in Egypt the army which England had so long kept in the island of Minorca as a threat against our Southern coast. This attack was to be supported by a Turkish army on the Syrian frontier, and by a corps from India on the coast of the Red Sea: whether it succeeded or not, it would, at least for some time, settle the dispute relative to the occupation of Egypt, which was the greatest obstacle to the conclusion of peace. Bonaparte, on his side, was preparing a supreme effort to consolidate his tottering conquest by sending reinforcements and provisions, of which the army stood greatly in need; at the same time, he was about to secure fresh means of influencing the negotiations.

Taking advantage of the friendly relations with Spain which the transfer of Tuscany to the House of Bourbon had created for him, of the admiration he had excited in a weak-minded king, of the terror he inspired to the latter's favourite, the Prince of the Peace, he had induced Charles IV. to declare war against his own son-in-law, the king of Portugal, under the ostensible pretext of making him shut his ports to the English, but for the real purpose of seizing one or more of his provinces in order to hold them at his disposal in the negotiations with England. Lucien had gained the Prince of the Peace by a mixture of flattery and menace; and the favourite transformed into a generalissimo, having overcome the repugnance of the king, was ready to march upon Portugal with all the soldiers that the monarchy of Charles V. could furnish, that is to say, with an army of twenty-five thousand men, to be supported by a French corps under the command of Leclerc and of Gouvion Saint-Cyr.

The almost openly avowed plan of the First Consul was, if circumstances permitted, to barter away Portugal to England, in much the same way as he had bartered away Tuscany to Spain and Venice to Austria. He had reached a pitch of cynicism in this respect which had never been carried so far under the most despotic monarchies, and which appears incredible when we think of the short space of time which separated the Consulate from the French Revolution. With regard to Tuscany he was not satisfied, as is generally stated, with erecting a throne without asking her consent in favour of a young man whose incapacity he ridiculed; he had ceded it to Spain as if it had been his own domain, that is to say, in full ownership. Article 6 of the treaty signed at Madrid ran thus: 'As the new House established in Tuscany is of the family of Spain, *these States will be the property of that country to perpetuity;* and an Infant of Spain will be called to the throne, if the present king or his children have no posterity.' It was thus that he disposed of a province situated in the centre of that Italy whose independence had been the theme of such magniloquent declarations in his manifestoes. Encouraged by the success of this bargain, he went still further: 'You will authorise Lucien,' he wrote to Talleyrand, the 2d of March 1801, 'to offer the States of Lucca to the duke of Parma, independently of Tuscany, but only on condition that the Spaniards give us three of the frigates which are at Barcelona or Carthagena, and six of the ships of war which are at Havanah, well equipped.' To surrender Tuscany, over which we had not even the right of conquest, in exchange for Louisiana, was a novel enough transaction on the part of a government that called itself republican; but to sell an independent State for six ships and three frigates—this was a proceeding which the world had never seen before.

Neither London nor Paris was under any illusion; so long as these different enterprises remained in suspense, the conferences of Otto with Lord Hawkesbury could only have the character of diplomatic conversations, in which each felt the way to a basis of negotiations rather than

tried to come to an understanding. If France had greatly extended her frontiers in Europe since the commencement of the war, England had taken possession of nearly all our colonies and those of our allies; conquests less brilliant, but much easier to preserve. From the Dutch she had taken Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope, and Guyana; from the Spanish Trinidad and Minorca; from ourselves Martinique, Sainte-Lucie, our possessions in India, besides Malta, which we had taken from the Knights. She had, moreover, conquered an immense empire in India. France had, it is true, in the meantime laid hands on nearly half the Continent, and she had taken Egypt from her ancient ally Turkey. But the insecurity of these possessions was so evident that the English plenipotentiary did not hesitate to propose to us as the principle of future arrangements the *uti possidetis*, that is to say, the retention pure and simple of the respective conquests: a principle that the French Government hastened to reject, basing its refusal on an eager zeal for the interests of its allies. Since it was necessary, as in all arrangements of this kind, to adopt a general principle subject to modifications necessitated by the force of things, they began to discuss the *status ante bellum*, that is to say, they agreed to take as a starting-point the situation of the two nations before the war. But it was soon perceived that each Government intended to interpret the clause to its exclusive profit, and as a matter of fact the principle of compensation was the only rule they followed; they endeavoured to regulate each restitution by finding an equivalent. The First Consul demanded the restoration of all the colonies to France and to her allies; the possession of India was in his opinion an ample compensation to England for the acquisitions which France had made in Egypt, in Italy, and on the Rhine. The English Ministry would not admit this system. They were thus driven to overstate their own claims to the great exasperation of Bonaparte, who displayed throughout the negotiation the fierce and haughty violence of an unbridled will; and but for the tact, the moderation, and sound sense of Talleyrand, the conferences would not have lasted a fortnight. They

had scarcely begun when, in his irritation at the obstacles which delayed them, Bonaparte ordered Talleyrand to give Lord Hawkesbury a communication, in which, after expressing his regret at the procrastination of the English Cabinet, procrastination caused by motives easy to guess, he was to inform him: '*That with regard to the small number of assassins who would act in France at the instigation of England, they were little to be feared; and the English Government must not found great hopes on their assistance.*'[1]

It was thus that Bonaparte understood diplomacy. Notwithstanding his consummate skill in the art of employing deception, his ungovernable impatience constantly led him beyond all bounds. Although such insults to a proud and susceptible nation were lessened by being conveyed through the supple and cautious Talleyrand, the negotiations were always affected by them in an unfortunate manner. The passionate outbursts of the man who conducted them betrayed themselves indirectly by shocks and surprises which of course engendered constant mistrust. Such language was so much the more impolitic, that the First Consul had lost by the death of Paul his principal support in Europe, and his most influential argument with the English Cabinet. It was, in fact, useless for him to declare in the same letter: 'That the sentiments of Alexander I. and of his Cabinet were greatly misunderstood in London, if they believed that he would ever betray the cause of the Continental Powers.' The English ministers had also private information on this point; and if they had had nothing to do with the assassination with which, by the strangest of contradictions, Bonaparte persisted in charging them, at the same time assuring them that they were ignorant of its consequences and would not reap the fruits of it, they were fully aware of the change in the dispositions of the Court of St. Petersburg towards the First Consul and his policy.

Russia was, in fact, much more disposed to break with France than with England, for the English alliance was necessary to her commercial prosperity; it was about to be cemented by mutual concessions which the two nations

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, May 28.

were on the eve of making with regard to rights of Neutrals; and Alexander, for his part, cared very little for that Grand Mastership of Malta, of which Paul had made a *casus belli;* while the French alliance only represented in the eyes of this Power a series of gross deceptions, of which no one had been the dupe except the crowned madman who had become the tool of Bonaparte. The recent annexation of Piedmont to France had completely unmasked the artifice. Even in Paul's lifetime, the Franco-Russian alliance was still in project; it only rested upon illusions of which each day more clearly showed the vanity; so that, in spite of all his blindness, this prince would have been forced before long to recognise that Bonaparte was making sport of him. Alexander had found the relations between France and Russia in that state of apparent cordial understanding which, being based upon an error, only needed a word of explanation on either side to change into open war. Without having his father's fixed ideas with regard to the restoration of the ancient *régime*, he still wished to preserve to a certain extent the system of patronage adopted by him towards certain dispossessed or threatened princes, such as the king of Sardinia, the king of Naples, and the king of Bavaria. From the moment of his accession, his intentions in this respect were made known by notes from M. de Kalitscheff so sharp and haughty in tone, that it became impossible for this minister to remain in Paris. In one of these notes, dated April 26th, 1801, M. de Kalitscheff recalled the promises in five articles which had been the ground of reconciliation between the two Governments; he pointed out how these promises had been broken with regard to the king of Piedmont, by taking his States; with regard to the king of Naples, by the armistice which Murat had just imposed upon him; and he added: 'The undersigned has orders to signify to citizen Talleyrand, that if he does not receive a positive assurance of the fulfilment of the five articles which the French Government had accepted as preliminaries, the re-establishment of harmony between the two countries can no longer subsist.' Talleyrand protested against the imperious tone of this ultimatum;

he even obtained some modification in the terms, but such language nevertheless minutely expressed the real state of our relations with Russia. Even the mission of Duroc to St. Petersburg in no way changed this state of affairs. He was received with much courtesy; Alexander even deigned to give him marks of confidence and familiarity,—comedy in which the Russians excel; but Bonaparte's aide-de-camp left without having gained anything. All that could be obtained of Russia was a cold neutrality, accompanied by a great deal of expostulation and much bad humour.

The second means upon which Bonaparte reckoned to influence the English negotiators, that is to say, the invasion and capture of Portugal by a Franco-Spanish army, was better calculated to work upon their minds than the phantom of an alliance henceforth buried in the tomb of the Emperor Paul. It was, however, in reality difficult to place the result of such a *coup-de-main* in the light of an equivalent to a solid and definite conquest, for the preservation of Portugal would have been the source of endless trouble to France. But affairs took such a turn, by reason of the distrust which the First Consul inspired, that he was unable to invoke this fact of possession upon which he had founded so much hope. While the negotiators were most actively engaged in conferences with the English Cabinet, they suddenly learned that the king of Spain had just treated with Portugal without having obtained the guarantees to which Bonaparte attached so much importance. Charles IV. had only undertaken this war through complacency and weakness, while calculation and vanity had been the only inducements of his favourite; Spain had no serious complaint against Portugal, and the ties of relationship which existed between the two Courts were more than sufficient to destroy the germs of discontent that Bonaparte had endeavoured to make use of.

This state of things made it easy to foresee the issue of this factitious quarrel. The king of Spain and the Prince of the Peace had very little personal resentment against the Court of Portugal; they were not likely, then, to claim more than the minimum of satisfaction it had been agreed

upon to demand, and this in fact happened. The Prince of the Peace having occupied Olivença and the province of Alentejo after a few slight skirmishes, and this success being obtained without the aid of the French, whom he did not care to see established in Portugal any more than in Spain, hastened to send for the king and queen to Badajoz, in order to share his triumph and receive the submission of the vanquished.

The Portuguese, warned by the approach of our troops of the danger of a longer resistance, hastened to disarm Spain by acquiescing in all her demands. They engaged to shut their ports to the English, to give up Olivença to Spain, and to pay an indemnity of 20,000,000 francs to France; and Charles IV., who could not wish for the ruin of his children, at once accepted the terms. This reparation was more than enough to atone for the wrongs of the little kingdom towards us; for in the state of weakness to which it was reduced towards the end of the eighteenth century, it was not in its power to free itself from English influence.

The treaty was signed by Charles IV. at Badajoz, and Lucien put his signature to it before he sent it to be ratified by his brother. The First Consul received the copy of it on the 15th of June; he wrote off at once to Talleyrand, under the influence of an irritation he was incapable of containing, that 'This treaty was contrary to the treaty made with Spain, contrary to the interests of the Republic, contrary to the instructions given to Lucien; it was one of the greatest reverses he had experienced during his magistrature; he would rather lose a province than ratify it; in short, the treaty *must be broken immediately*.'[1] At the same time, he gave orders to Leclerc and to Saint-Cyr to concentrate their troops, in order to occupy Oporto and three Portuguese provinces. But the Prince of the Peace, encouraged by the increasing embarrassment of the French Government, turned a deaf ear to their protestations, declared the treaty irrevocable, showed himself ready to resist, if necessary by the force of arms, the pressure they were trying to exercise over his Court; and Lucien, driven

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, June 15, 1801.

into a corner, offered his resignation. This news drove the First Consul into a paroxysm of rage: 'Let Lucien inform the king,' he wrote, 'that if the Prince of the Peace, bought by England, should draw the king and queen into adopting measures contrary to the interests and the honour of the Republic, the last hour of the Spanish monarchy would have struck.'[1] But it was impossible to realise this threat at such a time, for France, while negotiating and parading her pacific intentions, could not break with her only ally in Europe; and the remonstrances of Talleyrand, and still more necessity, very soon forced the First Consul to change his language. Moreover, the convention relating to the occupation of the Portuguese provinces had never had the absolute and obligatory nature which he had chosen to attribute to it since the opening of the negotiations with England. His own correspondence furnishes a very conclusive proof: 'If the king of Spain,' he wrote to Talleyrand, March 2d, 1801, 'will give way, and not occupy one of the provinces of Portugal, Lucien *may consent*, on condition that the king of Portugal gives us the three vessels that blockaded me at Alexandria.'

We have a confirmation of this opinion in the conduct of Lucien himself, who took a high tone with his brother, and always affirmed that he had a letter in his possession which authorised him '*to end things, on the sole condition that the ports of Portugal were shut to the English.*'[2]

This deception with regard to Portugal, and the coolness of Spain, happened at the same time as the news which reached Paris of the conclusion of the treaty negotiated by Lord St. Helens between England and Russia (dated June 17, 1801), and of the reconciliation of this latter Power with Prussia, whom the French Government flattered themselves they had gained by allowing her to occupy Hanover, and giving her hopes of keeping it. Other events, still more grave, had taken place a short time before, adding their weight in the balance in favour of peace. It required

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, July 10, 1801.

[2] See, amongst others, the *Mémoires* of Rœderer: *Notice pour mes enfants*.

all this to bridle the overgrown ambition that already dreamed of dictating laws to Europe. Our last attempt to revictual Egypt had been as unsuccessful as the preceding ones, and news of the capitulation of Cairo had just arrived in France.

The assassination of Kléber had thrown the command of the army of Egypt into the incapable hands of Menou. The only title of this general to so perilous a post was his right of seniority; and in spite of the low esteem in which he was held by the army, in spite of the humiliation felt by his brother officers in serving under such a chief, no one attempted to dispute it with him. Unfortunately the First Consul thought fit to confirm the appointment. Docility and devotion to himself began to be regarded by him as the unique measure of merit. Menou was almost the only general who would have given his full approbation to all that Bonaparte had done in Egypt. His admiration had so often been expressed in terms of such exalted enthusiasm, that some accused him of adulation and others of madness. He had anticipated the most chimerical wishes of his General-in-Chief, by becoming a convert to Islamism and marrying a Turkish woman; but his example found no imitators. He had in a word embraced all the illusions of that impossible romance, with the conscientious fanaticism of a narrow mind that denies the existence of obstacles from lack of vision to apprehend them. Under Kléber, at the time of the treaty of El Arisch, he had shown an extraordinary zeal for the preservation of Egypt; he had maintained that it might be kept indefinitely; but his advice, contradicted by the most intelligent chiefs of the army, with the exception of Desaix, had weakened rather than strengthened this opinion. He was a brave officer, irreproachably honest, but without military capacity; an inconsistent, desultory, and fantastic mind, full of singularities and defects which deprived him of all authority over the soldiers, unsteady and irresolute in character, of a lymphatic temperament, and affected with a shortness of sight physical and moral: such was almost the only partisan of the occupation of Egypt left in the army; such was the general that

Bonaparte had preferred to Lanusse and Reynier, men of the highest merit, but incapable of servility; such in short was the administrator whom he charged with a task too heavy even for his own genius.

Power was no sooner in Abdallah Menou's hands, than, anxious to prove by irrefutable arguments the possibility of founding a colony in Egypt, he began to upset all that had been done before him, in order to reconstruct everything anew. He issued decree after decree, order after order, with the unlucky fertility of a confused brain that mistakes agitation for activity, and thinks that the vice of things can be remedied by the virtue of words. He changed everything in the administration of the army, as well as in that of the country itself; he imposed upon the half-savage populations minute European regulations, hostile to their usages, to their instincts, to their ideas; he abolished national habits, proscribed certain costumes, altered the judicial system and the method of gathering taxes; he introduced into Egypt our forest-laws, established custom-houses, and even octrois; in short, he chose from our administrative system everything that was vexatious and calculated to render our domination odious and unbearable to the inhabitants.[1] He carried on his work of reform with a kind of feverish precipitation, as if he had a presentiment of its short duration. He childishly imagined that he resolved difficulties in proportion to the quantity of paper he scribbled over, which was certainly prodigious,[2] and which, in a century possessed like himself with the mania of law-making, gave rise to the opinion among some historians that Menou was an excellent administrator. The truth is, that he introduced everywhere the disorder and disorganisation that existed in his own distracted crazy brain.

So long as tranquillity was not disturbed by any external danger, the singularity of this eccentric man was harmless,

[1] Martin: *Histoire de l'expédition d'Egypte.* Regnier: *l'Egypte après la bataille d'Héliopolis.*

[2] The orders of the day of Menou (partly printed in Cairo and partly in MS.) make three volumes in folio. It is a chaos full of declamation and incoherence.

except that it created a great many malcontents in the army, and deprived a command without dignity of all prestige. But towards the beginning of the spring of 1801, bad news began to be circulated; the English army under Mahon was said to have arrived, first at Malta, and then at Macri; rumours were spread of its probable landing at Aboukir, of the imminent irruption of a Turkish army already formed in Syria. Menou did not know how to take any effectual measures of defence,—hesitation which was not extraordinary in the desperate situation in which he found himself placed. His generals entreated him to concentrate his troops round Alexandria, the best position for directing their forces on the point threatened. He remained stationary at Cairo, contenting himself with leaving Alexandria to General Friant with a few thousand men, and sending troops to Damietta, to Ramanieh, to Belbeïss, which were too dispersed to be formidable.

Abandoned to himself, Friant tried in vain to oppose the landing of the English, which took place upon the beach of Aboukir, March 5th, 1801. It must be acknowledged in justification of Menou that it was impossible to prevent this landing, for if the English had found the peninsula of Aboukir strongly guarded, they would have effected their descent at Damietta or at Ramanieh. The army was so thinned that they could not strengthen one point without leaving all the others undefended, and these other points it was highly necessary for us to preserve. It required a strong garrison at Cairo, where the population had revolted twice in three years; it required another equally strong at Belbeïss, to observe the Turkish army concentrated on the Syrian frontier; it required others at Alexandria, at Damietta, at Ramanieh, at Aboukir, only to mention places essential to our security. After these deductions, what remained of our army, which at the most did not count more than from 12,000 to 15,000 available men?

It is, then, a glaring injustice to render Menou responsible for a failure which had become inevitable. Placed in a perfectly identical situation, Bonaparte had not succeeded in preventing the landing of the Turks at Aboukir, although

he had an army incomparably stronger than that of Menou; he had, it is true, succeeded in driving them into the sea, but would he have done this so easily if, instead of what he called 'this Turkish rabble,' he had found himself confronted by 18,000 Anglo-European soldiers, full of energy, and commanded by excellent officers, if he had been threatened at the same time in flank by an army of 30,000 men coming from Syria, by a corps of 6000 Cipayes upon the coast of the Red Sea, if he had had in short to resist this accumulation of perils with an army reduced to nearly a third? Menou was doubtless an incapable general; but who had chosen him and kept him in command, in spite of the complaints of the army? From whatever point of view the question is considered, the responsibility of the disaster must fall entirely upon him who was the sole cause of it.

The same must be said about the fruitless attempts of Admiral Ganteaume to bring reinforcements to Egypt. Ganteaume is with Menou, according to the explanation adopted by historical routine, the principal cause of the ruin of the expedition. If he had succeeded, the glory would have been for another; he failed, all the blame must fall on him. Such is the justice of infatuation. Ganteaume was acknowledged by all to be a very brave and very skilful naval officer; warmly attached to Bonaparte, it was he who had saved him from the English cruisers at the time of his perilous return to France;—he made it a point of honour to succeed in the difficult mission which had been intrusted to him. Blocked in at Brest by an enemy's fleet, he boldly escaped under shelter of a fearful tempest, which dispersed his squadron; he rallied his vessels upon the coast of Spain, and passed through the Straits of Gibraltar with as much boldness as good fortune; but in the Mediterranean he was recognised by the cruisers of Admiral Warren, and not being able to accept the combat with his damaged vessels, crowded with soldiers and matter of transport, he re-entered Toulon, February 19th. He has been bitterly reproached for this resolution; but supposing he had accepted the combat, and that he had been victorious, which is very improbable, for though he had one or two vessels more than Admiral

Warren, his ships and his sailors were very inferior to the English squadron, which had neither the incumbrance nor the responsibility of a transport; even on this hypothesis, we say, it would have been impossible for him to have started again immediately for Egypt, with the certainty almost of meeting there the squadron of disembarkment. The frigate *Régénérée* which arrived at Alexandria the 2d of March, has often been brought forward; but an isolated ship may attempt such an adventure, while a fleet cannot; and if the *Régénérée* had the good fortune to escape the enemy's cruisers, the *Africaine*, which left at the same time, was captured.

When Bonaparte heard of Ganteaume's failure, he burst into one of those passions to which he always gave way whenever he got a shock from the force of things. The weakness of our navy had the privilege at any time of raising these passions into paroxysms. Rendering men responsible for the insufficiency of things, he more than once carried his reproaches to outrage; senseless outbursts, which cost the life of Villeneuve and so many other intrepid sailors, and were only worthy of that Asiatic king who caused the sea to be flogged for its indocility. Ganteaume did not however receive any direct reproach, but he received orders to start again immediately. He was not able to put to sea till the 20th of March. The English army had then been landed in Egypt for a fortnight; on the 13th of March they had gained over Friant and Lanusse a second and most sanguinary battle; and they were on the eve of gaining over Menou that of Canope, a decisive combat which took place March 21st. In this situation, the 4000 or 5000 men that Ganteaume's squadron was carrying could in no way change the issue of events. But Ganteaume's fleet experienced on the coast of Sardinia one of those accidents which it is impossible to foresee: two vessels ran against each other in the night, and both were so much injured that it was again necessary to put back into the port of Toulon (April 5th). During this time our demoralised army, which had lost at Canope 2000 men, and some of its best officers, among others Lanusse, the most brilliant of

all, was yielding the ground step by step before forces so superior that it could not think of confronting them in an open country.[1] At the beginning of May they lost Rosetta, and a few days after, Ramanieh. They now only retained two places, Cairo and Alexandria, without any communications between them, and in these two places they had to retire without hope of being able to defend them for any length of time. Egypt was henceforth irreparably lost.

Admiral Ganteaume was commanded to set sail for the third time. The place at which he had been ordered to disembark was the port of Derna, a small town situated on the shore of Africa, some days' march from Alexandria, and not only separated from this capital by a vast desert without water, but defended by savage populations that met our approach with a murderous fire. Ganteaume, having been obliged to leave behind him a part of his squadron, who were attacked by an epidemic, had only 2000 troops with him; to have landed them under such conditions would by the admission of all the officers have exposed them to certain destruction; had he possessed twice or three times these forces, he would in no way have changed the issue of the war, which was henceforth irrevocably fixed. He had not yet come to a determination, when the apparition of the English fleet forced him hurriedly to set sail.

The reproach and blame heaped upon this courageous seaman, for circumstances which were more powerful than his will, might have been applied to Bruix, Dumanoir, and Linois, for each of these admirals was entrusted with a similar mission, and for the same reasons none of them had been able to accomplish it. Bruix had received orders to leave Rochefort,[2] to join Dumanoir and Linois at Cadiz, and to set sail afterwards for Egypt; he was not able to execute even the first part of this movement. Linois, more fortunate, sustained at Algésiras against Admiral Saumarez a desperate fight, which was considered a triumph because the losses were nearly equal on both sides; but he brought

[1] R. Wilson: *History of the British Expedition to Egypt.*

[2] Order of May 19th, 1801.

back to Cadiz a fleet so shattered that it was unfit to put to sea. Meanwhile, General Belliard signed the capitulation of Cairo. Alexandria was now the only place still held by us in Egypt (June 27th, 1801).

The effect of these various checks was to render negotiations easier. Egypt being lost for us, although Bonaparte still said 'that Lord Hawkesbury was too enlightened not to know that Egypt was in Alexandria,'[1] the French Government made no further difficulty in agreeing that it should be given back to the Porte. The First Consul drew up a note for Otto, and destined for Lord Hawkesbury, which contained besides this concession all the sacrifices which he considered compatible with the honour of France. He had hitherto required that Malta should be restored to France, and Ceylon to the Dutch; these two restitutions had been, together with that of Egypt to Turkey, the greatest obstacle to peace; he now consented to let England keep Ceylon, which was valuable to her on account of her possessions in India, and to let Malta be given back to the Order. On the other hand, he insisted that in America, at the Cape of Good Hope, and in the Mediterranean, all the conquests should be restored to their former possessors. He engaged on his side to evacuate Portugal, and all the ports he occupied either in the States of the king of Naples or in those of the Pope.[2] He commanded Otto to add, that if England formed another coalition '*the only result would be to reproduce the history of the greatness of Rome.*'

These concessions induced the English Cabinet to give way; it consented to the greater part of the arrangements, but refused to admit the principle of a complete restitution of the colonies of America to France and to her allies; for if the sacrifices required of England in other parts of the world were to a certain extent balanced by her acquisitions, the advantages demanded from her in America remained, said the ministry, without compensation. They offered to give up the Antilles, keeping Dutch Guyana, or,

[1] To Citizen Caillard, July 29th, 1801.
[2] Note of July 23d, 1801.

vice versâ, to restore Guyana and keep the Islands. The First Consul would not hear of such conditions. He made a great parade of his indignation at the audacity of such propositions; he caused the most threatening articles to be inserted in the *Moniteur*, prescribed imperious language to his negotiator, announced that if they drove him too far he would make Hanover itself an object of exchange and compensation; and, finally, gave a fresh impetus to the preparations against England, which he had some time been making on the coast of Boulogne. Latouche-Tréville had under his orders organised a flotilla of gunboats, which the First Consul thought better calculated to create alarm than a really formidable armament. It was only later that he really entertained any serious idea of a descent upon England. Even in the country against which the attack was directed, naval officers were very little concerned about it; the press ridiculed it, but the less enlightened classes felt some alarm.

'Even in starting from the ports of Flanders,' wrote Nelson to the Admiralty, 'the descent is impracticable, if it were only for the cross-tides. As for rowing, that is, humanly speaking, impossible. You are quite right to be prepared against the madness of this man; but with the forces I have at my disposal I defy him to execute his absurd project.'[1] However, for the sake of quieting the alarms of the populace, some measures of defence were taken, and Nelson received orders to destroy the flotilla. But, forced to bombard, from being unable to approach the gunboats, he only caused them slight injury in his first attempt; and the second, undertaken under better conditions, but foiled by the wind and tide, which separated his four divisions of boats and only allowed them to attack successively instead of operating together, failed before the intrepid resistance of our gunboats.[2]

The fortunate result of these two petty combats, the obstinacy of Spain in refusing to revise the treaty of Badajoz, at last brought about the desired understanding

[1] Southey: *Life of Nelson*.

[2] Nelson's Reports of the 4th and 16th of August 1801.

between the two Cabinets. In London they no longer insisted on keeping anything in America beyond the island of Trinidad, a Spanish possession which Bonaparte had hitherto refused to cede at any price, and that now, following Talleyrand's counsel, he resolved to give up, in order to punish Spain for what he termed her treason. All difficulties were thus removed, but a last obstacle raised by the First Consul well nigh caused the failure of the negotiations. Concealing the susceptibility of his pride under the appearance of unlimited devotion to the interests of his allies, he first insisted that the cession of Ceylon and Trinidad should only be mentioned in secret articles, a stipulation incompatible with the publicity imposed upon the English Cabinet by the British Constitution; and, secondly, that the wording of this cession should be that France *did not oppose it.* If this formula was not accepted, Otto had orders to break off the negotiations; 'for,' said Bonaparte, 'he would not give it up, even if the English fleet should anchor before Chaillot.'[1] Nevertheless, he had to yield upon this point also. The text of the preliminaries which were signed in London the 1st of October 1801, to the great joy of the two nations, stated that His Britannic Majesty would restore to the French Republic and to her allies all their colonies conquered during the course of the war, *except the Island of Trinidad and the Dutch possessions in the Island of Ceylon,* over which islands and possessions His Britannic Majesty reserved to himself full and entire sovereignty.[2] The preliminaries of London stipulated besides the restitution of Egypt to Turkey, of Malta to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the *integrity* of Portugal, the evacuation of the Roman and Neapolitan States by the French troops, and of the islands and ports of the Mediterranean and Adriatic by the English forces. Nothing was said of the rights of neutrals, nor of Piedmont, nor of Genoa, nor of Tuscany, nor of the commercial difficulties so hard to regulate between the two countries. Both sides felt almost the impossibility of coming to an

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, September 17th, 1801.
[2] Preliminaries of London: Article II.

understanding on these different questions, and as each was equally tired of war, they passed them over in silence by a tacit agreement. But for this very reason the preliminaries of London, which caused so much rejoicing, and which were so glorious for the two great nations to whose temporary triumph they testified, both in Europe and in India, were in reality a suspension of arms rather than a definite peace. Each of the omissions we have mentioned was a cause for war, and the truce was only possible on condition that all explanation should be avoided on these points.

France had at this time, owing to the victories of our armies, an unparalleled position in Europe; and, in spite of all that she lacked in internal dignity, she might easily have consolidated her unrivalled preponderance, if the First Consul had been satisfied with influence instead of wishing for domination. Does it follow that when the historian comes to this time of splendour, it is his duty to close his ears and to shut his eyes, to avoid foreseeing a future so much the more inevitable as it was already being actively prepared? Is it true that in order to be just we must not look beyond the brilliant appearances that deceived contemporaries?[1] What is the use of knowing the chain and association of facts, if it is not to seize in them the consequences of false systems? And if we examine attentively this state of affairs, how can we fail to recognise that there was nothing there but illusions which might deceive the vulgar, but not vigilant and clear minds? France had acquired in Europe, at the end of this long war, certain possessions that no one had the wish or the power to dis-

[1] Let us avoid, therefore, premature accusations! Let us not trouble present happiness by an *unjust anticipation of the future*. Each season has its fruits. The one in which we shall have to gather bitter and sanguinary fruits will come only too soon. Let us not forestall it for an instant.'—Bignon: *Histoire Diplomatique*. 'Let us thank the wisdom of God for having shut men's eyes to the book of destiny. . . . We who now know all that took place then, and that has since taken place, *let us endeavour to regain for a few moments the ignorance of that time*, in order to understand and share its vivid and deep emotion.'—Thiers: *History of the Consulate and the Empire*.

pute; these were Belgium and Savoy which had freely joined us, besides the Rhenish Provinces, that had scarcely any attachment to Germany, and of which the preservation had been in some way imposed upon us by the constantly renewed attacks of the Coalition. Under such conditions, with the double rampart of the Alps and the Rhine, a policy at once firm and moderate would have insured us an impregnable position. But it would be blindness not to perceive that Bonaparte had no intention to confine himself within these limits, which alone were compatible with the peace of Europe. If in the negotiations he had so warmly espoused the interests of Holland, it was because he intended to remain master of the Batavian Republic, and govern it through his functionaries against the legally expressed will of the country; if he had reserved to himself the right to interfere in the regulation of the Germanic indemnities, it was because he hoped by this means to rule Germany. With the same object he secretly kept alive the divisions of Switzerland while he feigned to deplore them. He wanted to keep Piedmont and Genoa. As for the Cisalpine Republic, he did not even attempt to disguise the state of dependence in which he intended to maintain it; he laid claim to the direct sovereignty under the name of presidency; and we are not anticipating the future in accusing him of these different projects, for they were all fixed in his mind and already in course of execution. With such views, peace was a mere word flung to feed the weariness of some and the credulity of others.

The complementary treaties that he hastened to conclude with different Powers immediately after the signature of the preliminaries of London, in order to increase the effect produced by so grand a result, rested for the most part upon misunderstandings of the same kind. The treaties with Portugal and Turkey were nothing more than the ratification of the treaty of Badajoz and the capitulation of Alexandria. The news of this last event reached Paris a few hours after tidings had arrived of the fortunate issue of the negotiations of Otto; but the Turkish plenipotentiary was purposely left in ignorance of it in order that he might

sign the preliminaries with the conviction that they were making great sacrifices for him, when they were in reality only submitting to the force of things. With regard to the treaty with Bavaria, it promised this country much heavier indemnities than could be given, and the one with Russia (signed October 8th) contained a secret clause relative to Piedmont, which proved that here also there was an agreement on both sides to put off the difficulty instead of solving it. Russia, satisfied with the return of Malta to the Order of St. John, had not however relinquished any of her patronage: she still continued to protect Naples, Wurtemberg, and Piedmont. Article 6 said, 'That the First Consul and His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias would take care of the interests of His Majesty the King of Sardinia, and that they would have all possible consideration for the actual state of things.' Under this vague and confused language each of the two powers understood the arrangement to be the one that best suited it,—Russia the restoration of the king of Piedmont to his States, or his enthroning in the provinces which would be offered him in Italy by way of indemnity; France the confirmation of the *statu quo*. Here, again, we see that these stipulations were purely suspensive and provisional, they decided nothing, defined nothing; they only established a temporary disarmament, which was based upon an equivocal expression.

Behind the unprecedented brilliance of this short truce lay, then, a future pregnant with threats and complications; and these dangers did not depend on the secret thoughts of foreign Cabinets, who had infinitely more dread than desire to see the war burst forth again, nor on the natural turbulence of a nation satiated with glory and longing for repose; they lay entirely in the character of a single man whose marvellous genius was already attacked by that incurable frenzy of ambition which afterwards destroyed him. It is natural to hesitate in applying this epithet to a mind endowed with such extraordinary faculties; nevertheless, for those who study reality in itself, instead of accepting conventional traditions, it is difficult to admit the distinction which some have endeavoured to establish between the

time of the Consulate and the Empire. From this date it is impossible to assign any limit whatever to the plans and desires of that insatiable spirit, for it did not recognise any. All the power that Bonaparte has hitherto acquired is nothing more in his eyes than a weapon with which to conquer still more; and he shows less anxiety about consolidating it by conforming to the laws of the nature of things, than to increase it without measure at the risk of making it impossible.

In all times the true and distinctive mark of political genius has been aptitude for founding a solid and durable work, adapting it to the deep needs of a people and an epoch. The incomparable elements that Bonaparte possessed to realise such a work he only employs to astonish and to dazzle men. He tries to strike their imagination, not to satisfy their reason or their interests. The fate of his country is only a secondary object in comparison with the apotheosis which he dreams of for himself. Beyond this purely personal ideal of glorification, we fail to discover in him any persistent or definite spring of action. It is almost impossible for him to stop at a determined end; he has no sooner advanced a step than he goes farther still, again still farther, without ever waiting till the ground is firm under his feet. For him, a conquest is a stepping-stone for a fresh conquest. Hence the hasty, feverish, impromptu character of his political creations, at home as well as abroad. All that he does in this respect, with the impatience and rapidity of an ambition greedy enough to devour a world, is in his mind only a transition, a beginning capable of an indefinite extension. Consequently, everything remains unfinished, in a state of outline and experiment. He never acts with the idea of the definite, he wishes to retain to the last the power of changing everything according to opportunity, and above all things according to the humour of his insatiable cravings. He never aims at stability, but at size, at splendour; grandeur does not satisfy him, he must have the immeasurable, the gigantic; and beyond this perilous domain, something else attracts him still more; it is the unknown and the marvellous. Under

the sting of this irresistible disquietude, he forgets the road to follow and the end to attain in the movement itself. He cares less about the final result than about the means that he will display, and the prodigious effect that he will produce. It matters little to him whether the work is ephemeral, provided he finds in it more activity, more noise, more glory. The task to accomplish and the means necessary to insure success are trifles beside the grand adventures for which they furnish him the opportunity or the pretext. This infatuation was so much the more terrible that it had taken possession of a cold and positive mind, whose most chimerical dreams clothed forms of mathematical rigour, and had at their service a military genius without equal. With enthusiastic temperaments exaltation is only temporary; but the studied frenzy of a calculating mind is without remedy, because it does not depend on a sentiment but on the very form of the intellect itself.

The marvellous advantages the First Consul had obtained were nothing compared to those he dreamed of, and the anxiety which dwelt in his mind betrayed itself in his speeches as well as in his acts. In the course of negotiations with England, he several times threatened the English Cabinet with *reviving the grandeur of Rome.* These were no idle words, but the exact expression of his thoughts. His favourite Utopia was to attain both at home and abroad the omnipotence of the Cæsars. At home there was little to do to prepare men's minds for this transformation. Abroad he might consider the work as very far advanced. He reigned in reality over France, Belgium, North Italy; he held at his discretion Holland, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland; he had the upper hand in the affairs of Germany; the programme was more than half realised, and his sword would do the rest.

In the month of June 1801, he had enticed to Paris the young Infant of Parma, whom he had made king of Etruria. Under the pretext of celebrating his accession, he played the part of protector and of suzerain; as a woman of genius wittily remarked, 'He practised with this royal lamb the pleasure of keeping a king waiting in his

antechamber.'[1] He was delighted to expose a Bourbon to the ridicule of his courtiers and the scarcely dissembled contempt of his aides-de-camp, saying, 'That it was necessary to show these young men how a king was made,—that this was enough to disgust them with royalty;'[2] allowing the newspapers to state 'That he had made a king, though he would not be one himself.' His flatterers naturally enlarged upon this; it was another Roman idea, with this difference, however, that the protected or vanquished kings who came to Rome as solicitors or suppliants bowed before the majesty of the Roman citizens, while in Paris they humbled themselves before a single man. The abasement of royalty before his own power pleased him; not because it placed his fellow-citizens on a higher level, but because this degradation of the old monarchical hierarchy implied a higher dignity for himself. One rank only would suit this king-maker,—it was the Empire.

But though all things were working together towards this issue, no one yet dared to pronounce the word, the First Consul less than any one. He wanted the event to take place of itself. What rendered this, if not difficult, at any rate tedious to accomplish, was the impenetrability of his desires, and he had not a single real confidant; he never had one. If there is, in fact, a striking and characteristic trait in the innumerable conversations which have been preserved by men who approached him most familiarly, it is the absence of all effusion or unreserved confidence. He was always engrossed with the endeavour either to penetrate the views of his interlocutor or so to work upon his mind as to bring him round to a calculated object; we look in vain for anything like sympathy, enthusiasm, or a moment of frank confidence about himself or about others. Even when he gave way to that coquettishness of feline grace of which his contemporaries have so often described

[1] Madame de Staël: *Dix ans d'exil.*

[2] Thibaudeau: *Mémoires d'un conseiller d'état.* 'We saw with pain, says Savary, a fine tall young man, who would have to command men, tremble at the sight of a horse, and pass his time in playing at hide-and-seek or jumping upon your shoulders.'—*Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo.*

the seduction, he never lost sight of the effect he wished to produce; he calculated everything, even his imprudence in language. He was as reserved with his own relations as with strangers. In short, we cannot find in his whole life a single instance of that philosophical irony which charms us so in a Cæsar or a Frederick, because it shows that the man is superior to his part, that he knows his own value, that he is not the dupe of his own fortune. Listen to Frederick explaining the motives which led him to take possession of Silesia: 'Ambition,' he says, 'interest, the desire to be talked of, made me decide on war.' This is grand. Napoleon, on the contrary, is always on the stage, constantly thinking of himself; even when he sold Venice, or ordered the execution of the duke of Enghien, he pretended that he was acting as a benefactor of humanity; he had not that supreme greatness of the man who has a just appreciation of his worth; he remained, by his incurable infatuation, on a level with narrow minds; he had not even that sublime hour of the dying Augustus, who smilingly asked his friends, 'If they thought that he had played the drama of life well?' To his last day he wore the mask of the conventional Nero, as if he feared to lose too much in allowing us to perceive the man.

To his temporary reconciliation with the European Powers the First Consul had wished to join a definite reconciliation with Rome. The Concordat had been signed since July 15th, 1801. This was not a treaty of peace more or less revocable and precarious, but a real treaty of alliance that he meant to conclude. The idea of a compact between sacerdotal influence and his own ambition was not new to him; it had haunted him ever since the campaign of Italy, though he could not at that time foresee the way in which it was afterwards to be developed. It was then that he began to understand and practise the art of 'cajoling the priests,' to use an expression which he employed when he indicated to Joubert his line of conduct.[1] Such was the secret of the exaggerated deference which he studiously showed to the Pope and the Italian clergy; in private,

[1] Letter of March 15, 1797.

however, he made amends, by indulging in the most contemptuous expressions, for the marks of respect he lavished on them in public. With his familiars, he whom he styled '*the Very Holy Father*,' was only '*the old fox*;'[1] and the '*venerable prelates*' were unceremoniously spoken of as '*the black coats*,'[2] or '*imbecile dotards*.' But this calculated consideration only lasted as long as his interests required it. On his return to Paris after the Italian campaign, finding the philosophic spirit much stronger than he had expected, he immediately abandoned his allies of yesterday to flatter the prevailing opinion. On one particular occasion, in presence of the Directory and all the assembled bodies of State, he was heard to rank *religion* with royalism and feudality, among the *prejudices that the French people had to conquer*.[3] In Egypt, the philosopher changed into a Turk. It was not enough for him to recommend his soldiers 'to show the same respect for the Muphtis and the Imans that they had shown in Italy for the Rabbis and Bishops,'[4] he thus addressed the Arabs: '*We, also*,' he said, '*are true Mussulmans; was it not we who destroyed the Pope, who had said it was necessary to make war on the Mussulmans?*'[5] He boasted to them of having overthrown the Cross; he encouraged them to embrace Islamism.

This is what he who now styled himself the *New Charlemagne* had just said and done. Such a man would naturally become a Catholic again, whenever it was his interest to appear one. After such manifestations, it is somewhat puerile to endeavour like many serious historians to determine the part that religious sentiments had in Bonaparte's resolutions with regard to the Concordat. Any one can judge by these antecedents what importance can be attached to the celebrated conversation of Malmaison, so often quoted, in which Bonaparte, wishing to convince his interlocutor of the necessity of re-establishing official worship,

[1] Letter to Cacault, Sept. 26, 1796.
[2] Letter to Joubert, February 18, 1797.
[3] Speech delivered at the Luxembourg in December 1797.
[4] Proclamation of June 28, 1798.
[5] Manifesto of July 2, 1798.

exclaimed: 'The sound of the church bell of Rueil struck on my ears: *I was moved.*'[1] It is even superfluous to examine if, as Thibaudeau says, employing an expression of Napoleon, 'his nerves were in sympathy with the sentiment of the existence of God;' or if, as M. Thiers says, 'Bonaparte was inclined to religious ideas by his moral constitution.' Neither his nerves nor his moral constitution had anything to do with the Concordat. It is, however, well to mention these ideas, which have so little true relation with the man; for it is a remarkable thing that he was able to inspire them in minds not devoid of penetration.

The motives of the First Consul were in this what they were in everything; they sprang solely from the interests of his power and his policy. As soon as he had seized the dictatorship, he again became for the Church what he had been in Italy, and endeavoured to make it an ally. His measures with regard to the clergy of France had henceforth no other aim than to prepare for what the victory of Marengo could alone permit him to accomplish. Aiming at absolute power, he was naturally led to make use of the discipline and unity of the Catholic Church; but he looked upon it in no other light than as a means of domination. He never considered God himself in any other light than an agency of government. He has not given the whole truth on this point, but he has left us partial confidences which, though incomplete, suffice to destroy like old women's tales all motives of a religious kind. In the Notes dictated to Montholon, he plainly attributes the Concordat to 'a desire to reconcile the clergy to the new order of things, and to break the last thread by which the ancient dynasty was still connected with the country.' In his conversation with Las Cases he is much more explicit. He examines the different means he could have adopted; he recognises that he was at liberty to choose between Catholicism and Protestantism; he adds: '*That the general disposition of the moment was quite in favour of Protestantism.*' 'But,' says he immediately after, 'by the help of Catholicism I attained much more effectually all the grand results I had in view.

[1] *Mémoires d'un conseiller d'état.*

Abroad, the Pope was bound to me by Catholicism, and with my influence and our forces in Italy I did not despair sooner or later by some means or another of obtaining for myself the direction of that Pope; and from that time what influence, what a lever of opinion in the rest of the world!' Then passing on to his ulterior projects, to his private thoughts, and to what was the ideal of his ambition, he said: 'Had I returned victorious from Moscow, I should have succeeded in suppressing the Pope's regrets for his temporal power: I should have made an idol of him; he would have remained near my person. Paris would have become the capital of Christendom, and *I should have governed the religious as well as the political world.* It was an additional means of binding tighter all the federative parts of the Empire, and of preserving the tranquillity of everything placed without it. *My Councils* would have constituted the representation of Christianity, and the Popes would only have presided over them. I should have called together and dissolved those assemblies, approved and published their discussions, as Constantine and Charlemagne had done.'[1]

To be able to say '*My Councils*' as he said '*My Senate*,' and work the spiritual world like a regiment, such was in fact the ambition of this deluded genius, whose conceptions always ended in narrow results, because he always aimed at the immeasurable. In this mad dream that Rome herself could not realise in the limited universe of antiquity, the personality of Napoleon becomes the pivot of the world: it is an unique aliment which is to suffice for the communion of spirits as well as for the material activity of nations. The only possible complement to this vision is deification. It is not improbable that, seeing the fanaticism of which he was the object, he who so often envied Alexander the power of proclaiming himself the son of Jupiter Ammon sometimes dreamed of divine honours as the crown of his glory. Whatever may be the superstition which still attaches itself to the author of these gigantic chimeras, the future, we are sure, will not think it a proof of discernment

[1] Memorial of Las Cases.

on his part, that he conceived and encouraged it so few years after the death of Voltaire and Mirabeau.

When Napoleon discussed the different expedients which were open to him at the time of the Concordat, considering them all with regard to his own interest, there was one that he passed over in silence: it was that which consisted in leaving things as they were. It is true that as this state was purely and simply religious liberty, which promised him no other personal advantage than the honour and satisfaction of consecrating a great principle, such a thought could not present itself to his mind. To have in his hand a sure element of power, and to employ it solely for the general benefit, when he could turn it to his own exclusive profit, would have appeared to him the most infatuated dupery, even if he had been capable of conceiving the idea. The legal state of France at the time when the negotiations for the Concordat began, was full and unlimited liberty of religions, such as the United States of America possess. To the proscriptions of the Conventional *régime*, to the still jealous and distrustful toleration of the Directory, had succeeded full security for all forms of worship, owing to the abolition of the oath which had been the first cause of our religious dissensions.

Nothing more was required of the priests than a *promise* to obey the laws, and the famous distinction between the juring or constitutional clergy and the nonjuring or orthodox was only a question of doctrine with which the State had nothing to do. The Constitutionals, among whom were men who had shown great strength of character during the storms of the Revolution, gathered the greatest number of adherents; they numbered fifty bishops and ten thousand married priests; they held a large majority of the churches then open in thirty-four thousand communes.[1] The nonjuring clergy only reckoned fifteen bishops resident in France; but if their adherents were less numerous, they were more zealous and more active. Beside these two classes of Catholics, whose dissensions were a security rather than a danger to the State, the Protestant Churches,

[1] *Mémoires de Grégoire.*

the Jewish worship, and the inoffensive sect of the *Theophilanthropes*, which consisted in the remains of the different attempts of religious propaganda made under the Revolution, existed in perfect harmony.

All these sects, stimulated against each other by the hostility which is inseparable from the spirit of proselytism, but restrained by the very rivalry which existed between them, and still more by the general indifference which the philosophical spirit of the eighteenth century had created, looked upon their present situation as an unhoped-for benefit. Just escaped from shipwreck, they aspired to nothing better than tranquillity under impartial laws. They received no help from the State, but depended entirely on the contributions of the faithful. However insufficient these voluntary offerings may have been, instead of considering themselves oppressed by such a system, they declared that they were happy and contented. The Constitutionals especially went so far as to refuse the fees for benedictions, prayers, and masses.[1]

Nevertheless, this Church was the one in which the faithful would naturally show the most lukewarmness, because they had not been persecuted. Their views with regard to a state of things on which the clergy has since looked with a horror not at all evangelical, are recorded in a document of unimpeachable authority: it is the Letter of Convocation of the Council of 1801, written by Bishop Lecoz, who had been President of the first Council of the Constitutionals in 1797. 'Some of you,' he says in this letter, 'are alarmed at seeing our churches despoiled of their wealth. In this also adore divine providence. You know that for a long time the wicked have dared to say that the religion of Jesus Christ was only maintained by the great wealth that its ministers enjoyed. For a long time, also, the Church herself had mourned to see men enter her sanctuary, who appeared to be attracted by her riches only. The Lord wished by the same blow to confound blasphemers and infidels, and to put an end to the scandalous cupidity of her ministers. *The religion that he founded without the*

[1] De Pressensé, *L'Église et la Révolution.*

aid of riches, he will also maintain without this aid, unworthy of him. When Jesus Christ called his twelve Apostles, to what did he devote them? To the enjoyment of wealth and honours? No; but to work, to sorrow, and to suffering. If, then, we ministers of Jesus Christ find ourselves brought nearer to this apostolic state, ought we to murmur? Ah! let us rather rejoice at this precious spoliation, and bless the Lord who, by an act of admirable wisdom, has revived that ancient state of things which the most pious of his children has never ceased to regret!'

This memorable testimony and the noble sentiments of which it is the expression prove that not only the separation of Church and State was even then possible and practicable, but that it was unusually favourable to the morality of the churches, by the severe watchfulness they were thus forced to exercise over themselves. The effects which have since been attributed to this *régime*, the exasperation of religious hatred, priests ready to kindle the flame of civil war, or besieging the beds of the dying, are purely imaginary pictures. The acts of the Council of 1797, those of the Council of 1801, attest the most generous and most conciliating dispositions among the Constitutionals. They breathe towards their adversaries only sentiments of mildness and peace. The orthodox were more intolerant, but nothing was easier than to restrain them: instead of fostering troubles, they had powerfully contributed to the pacification of La Vendée, after Bonaparte had granted them freedom of worship. The substitution of the promise for the oath, the amnesty granted to those of their creed who had emigrated, their reinstatement in the temples, had converted them into devoted servitors of the Consular policy; and their gratitude was evinced in innumerable addresses.

In the absence of these sentiments, the fear of losing all by exacting too much, the competition of a rival clergy who had raised altar after altar, the dreaded influence of the eighteenth century, amply sufficed to keep them to their duty. Although the first marks of a revival of religious belief were then beginning to appear, all the enlightened portion of

the nation had remained Voltairean. And if we examine the nature of this revival among the men who gave the first signs of it, we find that it was very superficial; even with regard to the relative value of opinions and interests, it did not merit the importance that was about to be ascribed so gratuitously to the Catholic Church.

This revival of religious feeling was first felt under the Directory; but at that time it was only a reaction of humanity, sufficiently justified by the iniquitous persecutions of which the Catholic Church had been the object. The generous demands of Royer Collard and of Camille Jordan, in the tribune of the Five Hundred, had no other meaning; these two orators only asked for the Church common right, liberty to exist, the right to resume her ceremonies, nothing more. They spoke as politicians rather than as believers, and their doctrine as to the relations of the Church with the State had little in common with religious ideas properly so called. Their opinion had spread; it had powerfully contributed to the abrogation of the last measures of rigour, but it had gone no further. This reaction of humanity had been, so to speak, taken up again and continued by a reaction of the imagination against materialist doctrines. Men of letters like Laharpe, Saint-Martin, M. de Bonald; poets like Fontanes, Chènedollé, Esménard, and the most brilliant of all, Chateaubriand, were the leaders of this intellectual movement. Their principal organ was the *Mercury*, a name which alone indicates that it was much more literary than religious. Supported by the *Journal des Débats* and its critic Geoffroy, they waged a literary warfare against the writers of the *Pléiade*, Chénier, Andrieux, Ginguené, Garat. M. de Chateaubriand, who had only just returned to France, had already written but not published his *Génie du Christianisme*, so that the extraordinary success of this book cannot be brought forward, as it often is, to prove the timeliness of the Concordat. The *Génie du Christianisme* only appeared in 1802; at the time of the Concordat, *Atala* only was known to the public; it cannot, then, be said that the favour with which this brilliant work was received either enlightened or

deceived Bonaparte with regard to the feeling of France towards Catholicism. Whether the pretext be good or bad, it must be put aside, for it had nothing to do with his determination.

But if we examine more closely, we are forced to recognise that the basis itself on which this pretext rested did not exist. The real state of feeling and opinion required nothing of the kind. Chateaubriand's book will always remain as a testimony to the shallowness of that religious revival of which he was the principal representative. He has himself related[1] how the idea of writing his work occurred to him. Hitherto engaged in a directly opposite path and a very decided freethinker, the author of *L'Essai sur les Révolutions* experienced deep sorrow at the death of his mother; he received from her a pious exhortation which seemed to him to come from the tomb, and he was suddenly converted, not by conviction but by sentiment, in his quality of poet. He displayed in this sudden change, which was not to be the last, all the versatility of a man of imagination. It was not the free and deliberate choice of his reason that brought him back to Catholicism, it was the weariness of a wounded and morbid spirit that wanted consolation at any price. Many things, it is true, contributed to this,—his souvenirs of childhood, his prejudices as a man of birth and an emigrant, his regrets for the past; lastly, an unquiet imagination, whose excessive development had always been a fetter to his other faculties, and was besides incompatible with the rigour of philosophical studies. It was as a poet, too, that he wrote his Apology of Christianity; for if we carefully examine the *Génie du Christianisme*, we find it is nothing more than a piece of poetics. He does not appeal to reason but to imagination, to æsthetic sentiment. Instead of argument, the writer gives us images and pictures; he points out, in descriptions of great beauty, though somewhat too flowery, the grace and poetry of religious ceremonies, the charm of the customs of olden times, the beauty of the cathedrals, the hospitable greeting of the humble village church, the

[1] *Mémoires d'outre-tombe.*

sweet melancholy of the sound of the bells. He asks you to believe his religion, not because it is true, but because it is fine and productive of poetical emotions.

There is a wide difference between this religious dilettanteism and the austere inspirations of the ancient defenders of the Catholic faith; but in the weak state to which the terrible attacks of the eighteenth century had reduced it, this was all that could be furnished in its justification. If the Church had recourse to the descriptive style, a dialectic instrument somewhat novel in controversy, it was because all her ancient weapons had been broken in her hand. Such were the religious elements of French society at the time of the Consulate: a divided clergy who had little hold over the minds of men, satisfied with the unexpected liberty which had just succeeded revolutionary persecutions; a return to a faith, led by a poet of very fluid convictions, supported by fine writers, propagated as a literary fashion; in a word, responding to a need of the imagination. Far from being aggressive and avowing threatening pretensions, the Catholic Church was resigned, till Bonaparte awoke in her an ambition which was dormant if not extinguished. Moreover, with the spirit of domination which seems inseparably connected with her dogmas, and which her most recent traditions imposed upon her, it was not difficult to revive in her a desire to recover her privileges; but the tempter had soon reason to repent of having excited in her a cupidity that he could not and would not satisfy.

His allocution addressed to the clergy of Milan a few days before the battle of Marengo had opened the eyes of those who had been deceived with regard to the true meaning of the various advances which the First Consul had previously lavished upon the Church. They were not long in learning that the day after the victory he had sent Cardinal Martiniana to the Pope, to express his desire to enter into negotiations with the Holy See. After this overture, Monsignor Spina, Archbishop of Corinth, came to Paris to represent the Court of Rome; and Cacault, formerly *Chargé d'affaires* of the Republic, returned to

Rome. Several plans and counter-plans of the Concordat were discussed between Abbé Bernier and Monsignor Spina. It was a master-stroke on the part of the First Consul to have placed these negotiations in the hands of the priest whose agitation had so powerfully contributed to keep alive the fanaticism of La Vendée; at least, he was under this illusion: he supposed that a man who had given so many proofs of his zeal for the Catholic cause could never be distrusted at Rome; but in playing at subtlety with those patient and cunning diplomatists he seriously deceived himself. It was well known in Rome that Bernier, a cold fanatic in La Vendée, had become, since the cause of the Royalist party had appeared to him hopeless, the venal and servile instrument of the First Consul. The negotiations did not then proceed with the rapidity he had hoped for.

These unexpected delays prevented the success of his plans. Every one in Paris, except the small minority who by interest, by tradition, or by caprice, wished for the return of the ancient *régime*, was hostile to the idea of a Concordat. Singular measure of public utility, of which the utility was neither understood nor felt by any one! All the great bodies of the State, the Senate, the Legislative Body, the Council of State, the Tribunate, the Court of Cassation, everything in the nation possessing any representative or individual importance, the generals, the whole army, the personal friends of the First Consul, his family, in short, all whose opinion had any weight were openly opposed to this project. He defended it alone against their objections, for it was often attacked in his presence, not only as contrary to public interest, but, what was much more likely to have weight with him, as dangerous to his own power.

Although such an opposition was not very formidable in the state of dependence to which he had reduced the public powers, still, as it might give rise to a movement of opinion of which it was difficult to calculate the effect, a speedy termination was indispensable in order to avoid difficulties. The First Consul consequently resolved to deal summarily with Spina's temporisations and to address

himself directly to the Holy See. He sent the plan of a Concordat to Rome, to which he joined the restitution of the Madonna of Loretto, an object of devotion which for several years had figured in the National Library as an object of curiosity, and the restoration of which seemed to him likely to conciliate the Pope. This project, after having been submitted to the three Counsellors of the Holy See, was presented to a congregation of twelve Cardinals, who drew up a counter-project, containing all the concessions that the Court of Rome felt justified in making to the demands of the French Government. The pretensions of this Court had risen with her fortunes. She accorded to the First Consul all that he demanded concerning the new diocesan conscriptions, the sanction of the sale of the national domains, indulgence for married priests, the nomination and institution of bishops; but the Pope persisted in refusing to dismiss the bishops who would not resign, if their dismissal was judged necessary in order to facilitate the new distribution of the episcopal sees; and, above all, he inexorably demanded that Catholicism should be proclaimed *the religion of the State.*

Bonaparte, out of patience, replied by giving Cacault orders to quit Rome if in five days his project was not adopted in its original form. Nothing was more irritating to a character like his than this clerical diplomacy, in which he met a subtlety at least equal to his own, and which, under a fair-worded, obsequious gentleness, nevertheless opposed him with invincible tenacity. Hence the sudden changes from craft to violence which marked his intercourse with the Court of Rome. He was not long in perceiving that fear was the influence which acted most powerfully on the minds of these aged prelates, who had mostly grown old among the intrigues and the puerile gossiping of a government of priests; but this discovery soon made him go beyond all bounds in the employment of such a means of persuasion. Cacault, in face of the resistance of the Holy See, was obliged to leave the Roman States, but he avoided the rupture of the negotiations by obtaining permission for Cardinal Consalvi, the favourite

minister of Pius VII., to start for Paris in order to come to an understanding with the First Consul (June 1801).

Cardinal Consalvi, a pliant, insinuating character, who concealed extreme subtlety under an appearance of good-nature and simplicity, and who united real courage with that almost feminine pusillanimity which the trifles of clerical life develop, set out for Paris recommending his soul to God. He committed the error of freely expressing his fears in a confidential letter to Acton, a copy of which was almost immediately transmitted to the First Consul by Alquier, our minister at Naples.[1] This information was not lost on Bonaparte, who thought he should easily overcome the Roman diplomatist by intimidation. Everything was in fact arranged, so that, as soon as he arrived in Paris, his susceptible mind might, as it were, be awed and subjugated before he had time to reflect. Consalvi has left us in his curious Memoirs[2] an exact and circumstantial account of his first interview with Bonaparte. In the most minute details of this theatre scene we recognise the skilful hand of the great speculator in humanity; and his character itself is portrayed with striking truthfulness. Consalvi arrived in the evening; the next morning was fixed for an audience, without giving him time to recover from the fatigue of a long and trying journey, or to consult either with Spina or with his counsellor and co-operator, the theologian Caselli. The next day at an early hour Bernier conducts him to the Tuileries; he is introduced into a little isolated room, which appeared to be the antechamber of the First Consul's Cabinet. After waiting a long time, a small door is pointed out to him, he enters, and there, instead of the private audience he expected, he finds a large and ceremonious reception, where all the bodies of the State, the Senate, the Legislative Body, the Tribunate, the generals and their staff, were assembled. In the court he perceives a number of regiments drawn up for a review. It was, to use his own expression, like 'passing from a hovel to a palace.' All the splendour and all the

[1] Artaud: *Histoire de Pie VII.*

[2] *Mémoires du Cardinal Consalvi*, published by Crétenau Joly.

prestige of Consular power had been concentrated in a single picture in order to strike his imagination. He crosses saloons crowded with dignitaries; he comes at last before the three Consuls surrounded by a brilliant retinue. Bonaparte advances towards him, and says in curt and peremptory tones: 'I know the motive that brings you here. You have five days for the negotiations. If the treaty is not signed in that time, all is at an end.'

Everything had been admirably calculated in this theatrical scene to dazzle and trouble the timid prelate; but they had not reckoned on the subtlety of the Italian, nor on the tenacity of the priest. Consalvi resumed the negotiations where they had been broken off; he protested against the precipitation that they tried to impose on him, in order to hinder him from communicating with his Court; he disputed the ground step by step with Bernier and Crétet, the two champions of Consular policy, for Joseph only figured in name. They very quickly agreed to substitute the expression 'religion of the majority of the French' for that of 'religion of the State.' They declared too that the Consuls were to make a *special profession* of the Catholic faith, which pledged them to nothing, and that the number of episcopal sees should henceforth be fixed at sixty; but as to decreeing the removal of the actual occupants who refused to resign, Consalvi held out for a long time. He pointed out with great clearness how contrary such a step was to the maxims of the Gallican Church, always so jealous of the prerogatives of the episcopal power. Bonaparte affected great zeal for Gallicanism; but when Gallicanism interfered with his plans, he did not hesitate to put his foot on it, as on everything else that embarrassed him.

In this kind of diplomatic warfare, in which he displayed all the resources of his crafty genius, Bonaparte had the great advantage over Consalvi, that what was for him an affair of ambition, of doubtful utility, was for the Court of Rome a question of life or death. If she did not agree with him, all was lost for her, and to all appearance lost for ever. To this superiority of situation he added stratagems which he thought likely to work upon the mind of the nego-

tiator. He allowed him to hope for the restoration of the Legations to the Holy See without ever formally promising them to him; thus taking advantage of the scruples of the prelate, who could not directly approach the subject without exposing himself to the accusation of the sin of simony. Through M. de Cobentzel, who was then in Paris, he sent him remonstrance on remonstrance: the ambassador constantly represented to Consalvi the responsibility he was assuming with regard to the Catholic Powers by causing the attempt at reconciliation to fail. To the employment of this influence the Consul added a still more powerful stimulus. Towards the end of June 1801, at his suggestion, a Council of the Constitutional Church was convoked. This Council was then sitting with the pomp and state which he had encouraged. Bonaparte had interviews with the Abbé Grégoire; he pretended to consult him about his plans for the definite organisation of the Church of France.[1] The Constitutional clergy in consequence loudly testified their gratitude for a protection, of which they could not penetrate either the motive or the end. The Constitutional Church was in fact only a makeshift of the First Consul, and the liberty that he accorded to it only a threat directed against the Holy See. He hastened to break up the Council as soon as he had no longer any need of its demonstrations. But the menace made an impression at Rome; they saw schism already definitely triumphing in France, perhaps even in Italy, for the opinions of Scipio de Ricci had found a number of adherents in Lombardy and in Piedmont.[2] These apprehensions on the one side, and impatience to come to a conclusion on the other, led to those mutual concessions which are indispensable in every transaction. 'It appears that things are going on well, and that we shall arrange matters with the Cardinal,' wrote Bonaparte to Talleyrand, July 7th. 'I have a second blister on my arm; *a moment of illness is opportune for settling affairs with priests.*'

All was not finished however. A last surprise, much

[1] *Mémoires de Grégoire.*
[2] Carlo Botta: *Storia d'Italia dal* 1789 *al* 1815.

more extraordinary than anything that had hitherto taken place, was now in reserve for Cardinal Consalvi. When the treaty was drawn up and the copies made, he went to Joseph to affix his signature. After the customary compliments they sat down round the table; the Act was presented to the Cardinal. Just as he took up his pen, what was his astonishment, on casting his eyes over it, to perceive that not only was the Act quite different from the one last drawn up, but that it was the exact copy of the first project of the French Government! Confounded with surprise, he could not suppress his indignation. Joseph, as astonished as himself, protested that he knew nothing about it; that he had just arrived from the country; Bernier, who had brought the unlucky copy, affirmed that he had received it from the First Consul, and threw all the blame on him. They entered into a discussion which lasted for nineteen consecutive hours,[1] and the Act, restored to its original form, was taken to Bonaparte, who flew into a passion and tore it to pieces. At the following audience he went up to Consalvi, and, interrogating him with violence, exclaimed: 'If Henry VIII., who had not the twentieth part of my power, was able to change the religion of his country, how much more easily should not I be able to do it! I will change it not only in France, but in the whole of Europe. Rome will shed tears of blood . . . but it will be too late; there will be no remedy . . . start, then, start . . . when shall you start?'——'After dinner, General,' coldly replied Consalvi.

In reality, neither desired this departure. The article, which was the principal cause of these outbursts and this dissimulation, this edifying prelude to the reconciliation between Church and State, was worded thus: 'Worship will be public, conforming to the rules of police.' In the eyes of Consalvi this clause, by the latitude it left to interpretation, was tantamount to the bondage of the Church; and in truth, after having dreamed of the re-establishment of a State religion with all its consequences, the change was somewhat hard. The bondage of the Church was not found

[1] Consalvi: *Mémoires.*

in any particular formula, but in the whole tenor of the Act. He felt he had won a great victory in getting the following words added to the clause: '*which the Government may deem necessary for public tranquillity*'—a restriction more apparent than real, and of which his perplexities immensely increased the importance in his eyes. In consideration of this insignificant concession Consalvi at length yielded, and signed, July 15th, 1801, an Act that sealed the dependence of the Church, giving it, it is true, a great many material advantages. Bonaparte signed it on his side with the firm conviction that he had strengthened his own authority by giving so large a part of political influence to a power that possessed in a much higher degree than himself the spirit of domination; for he was only a tyrant created by circumstances, while the Church was the incarnation of the theocratic principle. This power which he restored to her, when he could so easily maintain her under the rule of common law, he foolishly flattered himself she would only use for his benefit. Already deep in his dream of a political Epimenides, he quoted Charlemagne on every occasion; and he was quite taken aback when he perceived that the Court of Rome began to quote Gregory VII., as if the anachronism were more senseless on one side than on the other.

Thus was this artificial restoration accomplished: it gave a power to dead ideas which though trifling enough at first soon became formidable. At the time when the Concordat was concluded Catholicism no longer existed as a political influence; thanks to the position it then reconquered, it was able to get a fresh hold on the rising generation, and to prepare for us those long and sterile conflicts in which we have seen ultramontane absolutism imperil all the conquests of modern thought. Abbé de Pradt assures us that he often heard Bonaparte say, 'that the Concordat had been the greatest fault of his reign.'[1] In the notes at St. Helena, in which he endeavours to prove that he never committed any faults at all,[2] Napoleon denies that he ever

[1] De Pradt: *Les quatre Concordats.*
[2] *Notes et Mélanges, dictée à Montholon.*

made such a remark, with a warmth which gives an appearance of truth to the abbé's assertions. But whether the expression be exact or not, we are forced to acknowledge that Bonaparte in signing the Concordat signally failed to attain his end, whatever it may have been. He failed equally, whether he tried to regulate the relations of Church and State, or whether he desired before all things to have the Church for an auxiliary and an instrument. In spite of expressions of friendship, in spite of the Oath of Obedience, which, according to a panegyrist of the Concordat,[1] '*made a kind of sacred gendarmerie* of the clergy,' this treaty of peace, in which both parties had tried to deceive each other, was the beginning of war. At Rome at the time of the ratification the Pope experienced great concern, almost remorse. He had seen a number of the *Moniteur* which contained the famous proclamations in Egypt. The perusal of this paper had filled his timid mind with fear and mistrust. He was assured that it was a falsified copy of the *Moniteur*, and he accepted the explanation with the eagerness of one who wishes to be deceived. In Paris Bonaparte quickly manifested his intention of ruling the Church as he ruled the State. The day after the signature of the Concordat he sent for Consalvi, and said to him carelessly, as if the thing had been agreed upon, 'I am really much embarrassed about striking a balance between the Constitutionals and the Non-Constitutionals in the nominations to the bishoprics.' The First Consul had assured the Cardinal a hundred times over that he had entirely abandoned the Constitutionals, and that he should never think of making any of them bishops.

This was only the beginning of hostilities, and that first disappointment was nothing compared with the mortifications that were in store for the Court of Rome. Consalvi wished that at least the Constitutionals should only be admitted to episcopal honours after a formal recantation; he had not even this satisfaction. Caprara, Spina's successor, installed several of them as canons, whose abjuration Bernier had falsely guaranteed, and who afterwards protested against the

[1] Bignon: *Histoire diplomatique.*

dishonourable action which had been attributed to them. The *Moniteur* soon made the clergy feel that, if the protection of the State had its advantages, it had also its drawbacks. A priest of Paris who had refused a Christian burial to a ballet-dancer was censured, and informed by the official paper 'that he had three months' retreat, in order to remember that Jesus Christ had prayed even for his enemies.'[1]

About the same time, Cardinal Maury, who lived in the Pontifical States, having had the misfortune to give umbrage to the Consular Government, the Holy See was compelled to interdict his sojourn in Rome. The imperious policy of the First Consul soon added yet more bitter grievances to these reasons for discontent. The Holy See, however, only testified its displeasure by tardiness in fulfilling its engagements relative to the dismissal of the refractory bishops. The Pope still hoped, and even asked, for the restoration of his ancient provinces. He wrote to Bonaparte: 'We implore of your magnanimous, wise and just heart, the restoration of the Legations, and a compensation for Avignon and Carpentras' (October 24th, 1801). To claim them as the price of the Concordat would have been simony; but to ask for them as a reward for good-will was simony no longer. Such have at all times been the distinctions made by ecclesiastical morality. The First Consul, who was no less subtle, did not give back the provinces, but he liberally restored to the Court of Rome the mortal remains of Pius VI.; a sacred gift, which was received with great protestations of gratitude, but which did not contribute much to the re-establishment of a cordial understanding between the two Powers. Astonishment was the prevailing feeling of the public on the announcement of the conclusion of the Concordat; in the army it was contempt, in the political assemblies cold discontent or affected indifference. When Bonaparte gave the news to his faithful followers, the Council of State, a frozen silence was their only reply; and when shortly after the brief was read to them, in which Pius VII. restored to civil life '*his very dear son Talleyrand*,'

[1] *Moniteur* of the 20th November 1801.

stifled laughter was heard, and the greater number disdained to vote. This restoration of ecclesiastical authority formed such a contrast to the sentiments and opinions which the Revolution had introduced into France, that people could scarcely take it seriously, so improbable did it appear.

Even Bonaparte himself had sometimes difficulty in preserving his gravity. The day that Consalvi, decked in the Roman purple, presented him with the copy of the treaty in a public assembly, the First Consul was seized with such a convulsion of laughter that the audience remained confused. The great anxiety of officials in religious ceremonies was to keep their countenance to the end. 'If a single burst of laughter had given the signal,' wrote one of them, referring to the coronation, 'we ran the risk of being seized with the irrepressible laughter of the gods of Homer.' The man who experienced this fear was not a laic, but one of the highest dignitaries of the Church.[1]

The First Consul waited with great impatience the arrival of the bulls relating to the diocesan circumscriptions and the bestowment of the bishoprics; he earnestly pressed the Court of Rome to finish the affair, sent entreaty upon entreaty, refused to receive the legate Caprara till they had given him satisfaction; but zeal in the interest of religion, so new for him, was not the cause of his ardour. In his incessant quest after effect, after a means of producing an impression on imaginations, he had conceived the plan of a theatrical stroke of a new kind, a sort of diplomatic Marengo, intended to dazzle by peace those whom he had hitherto dazzled by war. He wished all the treaties of peace which he had just successively concluded with the European Powers to be announced the same day, at the same hour, in a grand *fête* of Peace, to be given on the anniversary of the 18th Brumaire; and to all these treaties he wished to join the Concordat, 'in order that the peace of the Church and the peace of Europe might be published at the same time throughout the whole extent of the Republic.'[2] He had ordered great preparations to be made

[1] It was the Archbishop of Malines.

[2] Bonaparte to Portalis, October 15, 1801.

for this ceremony, he had had the *Regent* incrusted on the hilt of his sword,[1] symbolical removal of the ensigns of power which had henceforth fallen from the crown to the sword. But, notwithstanding all this care and all these arrangements, the grand stroke failed, by reason of the continual delays of the Court of Rome, who pretended not to have had time enough to receive replies from the bishops who had taken refuge in Germany. An additional proof of the sentiments which had inspired this memorable negotiation, and the kind of importance he attached to it, is that the new Charlemagne felt such vexation at the failure of his *fête*, that the peace of the Church became suddenly indifferent to him, and the publication of the Concordat was again postponed for *nearly a year.*

[1] Bonaparte to Chaptal, October 6, 1801.

CHAPTER V

DECREE OF LYONS—TREATY OF AMIENS—SAINT DOMINGO

We should have a very incorrect idea of the disposition of the First Consul, of his plans, of the restless faculties of his fatal genius, if we were to suppose that possessing such great fortune, and satisfied with the extraordinary successes which marked the end of the year 1801, he was going for a time at least, if not to enjoy his glory in peace, yet to devote himself to the consolidation of the advantages he had acquired. Loaded with honours and power, holding an undisputed preponderance abroad, at home authority unlimited, exercising a sort of fascination over the imagination of his contemporaries, who seized with avidity the ideas he deigned to offer for their meditation and gave a legendary turn to all his actions, it was in his power to give an impulse to internal prosperity, and become still greater in peace than he had been in war. But such thoughts were far from his mind; he was already with all his soul in new adventures. The marvellous diplomatic successes he had just obtained, peace signed with all the great States of Europe, who were henceforth resigned to leave to our country not only a complete independence but a great influence in the world,—all these inestimable benefits, acquired at the cost of so much blood, were regarded by him as personal property, to be employed for new speculations and the exclusive profit of his own greatness.

The preliminaries of London, which had caused so much rejoicing among the nations, were scarcely signed, when, at the risk of retarding the conclusion of a definite peace, the

conditions of which were about to be discussed at Amiens, Bonaparte was already entering upon three or four different enterprises with his usual menacing and feverish activity. These enterprises were, it is true, capable of being carried out in the first moment of surprise, owing to the momentary weariness of the Powers; but any one of them was alone sufficient to rekindle war at some time or other. He took advantage of his success to hasten the accomplishment of his projects, reckoning on the stupor of some, upon the weakness of others, interpreting silence for consent, and ready to put his hand on his sword when any one should dare to oppose him. He effected the definite confiscation of all those small States which since the Revolution had fallen into dependence, such as Holland, Switzerland, the Republic of Genoa, and the Cisalpine Republic; but this was a provisional measure, he said, taken with a view to their own interests, and by the necessity of war. Treated most often as conquered provinces by their liberators, these States had embraced the principles of our Revolution; they had adopted institutions similar to ours, they had accepted all the burdens we had cast on them, in hope of purchasing their liberty at the price of these sacrifices. That hope had been encouraged. Quite recently, the treaty of Lunéville had solemnly recognised their independence. Article XI. of this treaty, the work of Bonaparte himself, ran thus: 'The contracting parties mutually guarantee the *independence* of the Batavian, Helvetic, Cisalpine, and Ligurian Republics, *and liberty to their inhabitants to adopt what form of government they think fit.*' This Article gave Austria a formal right to interfere in their favour. It is difficult to imagine how this guarantee of independence could be construed into the imposition on these people of a *régime* copied from the Consular dictatorship or emanating from it. Such was, however, the interpretation to be put upon it by our policy. To perpetuate, and even to increase, the thraldom which had oppressed these Republics was not only dangerous, on account of the justifiable discontent which such proceedings must create in Europe, it was useless; these States could not defend themselves against us, they were attached to us

by interest, had need of our protection, and only asked to live in peace under our influence. But these fatal projects were ready for execution; the First Consul was moreover preparing for the reconstruction of our ancient colonial power by means of an expedition to Saint Domingo, a plan which was not likely to raise so many difficulties as the expedition to Egypt, but which, being founded on the same illusions, led to still greater disasters.

Thus the peace of Amiens was not yet concluded when Bonaparte was already carrying out with eagerness plans which must endanger its solidity. He was complicating and compromising the future before he was assured of the present. And all these projects of aggrandisement, in which he himself and not France was to figure in the first rank, in order to gain fresh personal glory, were to furnish means of increasing his power at home; they were the necessary and calculated introduction to a fresh usurpation. Could he, who was about to be entrusted in Italy with veritable royalty, under the name of President of the Cisalpine, be content with temporary dictatorship in France? If his invectives, by turns disdainful and irritated, against all who had preserved any attachment for liberty, if his successive encroachments on all the powers had not clearly enough announced his intentions, was not the omnipotence thus asserted abroad a significant invitation to fear and servility at home? To strike the last blow to that detested opposition, whose censure even when whispered low had become unbearable to him, to efface from the constitution the limit of time, the only one which had been imposed on his authority, to annihilate that shadow of legislative power which he had hitherto tolerated, such was to be the price of this increase of power abroad.

It was indispensable to work all these changes with rapidity, in order to be able to present an accomplished fact to the English negotiator. Before Lord Cornwallis had arrived at Amiens, the new constitution for the Cisalpine was written, and that of Holland imposed upon the country. Bonaparte had not yet found sufficient time to assume the supreme magistracy of the Batavian Republic; it was

enough to covet it in Italy: to have gone further than this would have been to exceed the limits of prudence. He contented himself then with a change of institutions, which permitted him to reign through his creatures; but he wished this change to be called for by the Dutch themselves. The Batavian Republic was a government composed of a Directory and two legislative chambers. The First Consul, together with the Dutch ambassador, Schimmelpennink, submitted to the suffrages of these two chambers the new constitution which he proposed for Holland. This constitution appointed a president *to be elected for three months*, a clause which plainly showed the kind of power he gave to this sort of upper clerk. The two chambers, of whose docility he felt assured, honoured themselves by rejecting the constitution; they were driven from the hall where they sat by the Directory, with the aid of Augereau. 'This,' wrote the *Moniteur* of September 26th, 1801, in relating this *coup-d'état*, 'was accomplished with the greatest calm. The Directory took this resolution *in its wisdom*, with the approbation of the presidents of the two chambers, and solely *in order to leave the people time to use their rights.*' The new constitution was consequently submitted to the vote of the population. Out of 416,419 citizens who had the right of voting, 52,219 voted against it, the rest did not vote. This silence was interpreted as a consent, and the constitution was proclaimed. It was thus that the independence of the Batavian Republic was recognised (October 17, 1800).

In his *Exposé de la situation de la république*, presented a few days later to the French Legislative Body, Bonaparte had the audacity to congratulate Holland on the event of which she had just been the witness and the victim. He alluded to it in these terms: '*Batavia blamed her organisation because it had been made for her . . .* it is a principle of the Government that nothing is more fatal to the welfare of nations than instability in institutions, and the Batavian Directory has been constantly reminded of this principle. *But the Batavian people wished for a change, they have adopted a new constitution. The Government has recognised*

it, and it was obliged to do so, because it was the expressed wish of an independent people.'

Such was the truthfulness of these famous reports, in which facts are grouped together in so specious and brilliant a manner. It is easy to imagine with what feelings such declarations were read by nations who knew their worth. Nevertheless the calm and patient population abstained from all demonstration, deeming murmur vain and resistance impossible. The Cabinet of London was beset by the complaints of the Prince of Orange; but having no desire to recommence the war, the ministers confined themselves to asking 'if Holland was to be annexed to France, like Belgium?' To which Otto replied, 'That every State had a right to organise itself as it pleased; that Holland free, perfectly free, had her representative at Paris, like any other Power.' And after this frank and cordial explanation, nothing more was said, at least for a time.

It was to the same end that the First Consul actively interfered in the intestine quarrels of Switzerland, in which the impartiality and disinterestedness of his intervention have so often been praised. Since, at his instigation, the Vaudois patriots, blinded by their hatred of the tyranny of Berne, had brought upon their country the evils of a foreign invasion; and since the Directory had pillaged Switzerland in order to meet the expenses of the Egyptian expedition, this Republic had experienced at once all the evils of servitude and those of anarchy, the French being interested in keeping alive civil discord in order to perpetuate their own domination. The armies of the coalition had lost no time in invading her territory, and, under pretext of delivering her, had exposed her to all the ravages of war. Fallen again into our power after the victory of Zurich, a prey to the struggle of parties, who sometimes in the name of the federal principle, sometimes in that of the military idea, tried to gratify their rancour or re-establish their privileges—the promises of the treaty of Lunéville raised her hopes of obtaining once more that salutary neutrality which had so long preserved her.

But the French troops did not evacuate the Swiss terri-

tory. The First Consul could not think of treating the Swiss as peremptorily as the Italians. Neither the republican pride which they still retained, nor the susceptibility of Europe, would have permitted him openly to seize power in Switzerland as he had done in the Cisalpine; but he tried to obtain the same end under a different name and by more covert means. He adopted with Switzerland a very simple policy, which consisted in rendering in that country all government impossible until the Cantons should place themselves at his discretion. Besides this principal object in the interference in the internal affairs of Switzerland, he had a secondary one in view, and that was to annex to the two departments of *Mont-Terrible* and *Léman*, which France had already wrested from the domains of the Confederation, the Canton of Valais, which he had resolved to appropriate in order to facilitate communications with Italy by the Simplon.

Under the influence of his action, skilfully dissimulated but strong and incessant, government followed government without succeeding in establishing any firm power. Taking advantage of the grudges which the different parties cherished against each other, turning the balance alternately in favour of opposite factions, pursuing with a special hatred the unitary patriots, as the party most likely to cause ideas of independence to triumph, he protested on every occasion his interest in Swiss liberty, his desire to see stability re-established in the institutions, taking care, however, never to go beyond these general assurances which each could interpret in the sense best suited to his wishes. Whenever a plan of organisation was submitted to him, he praised or criticised it in terms as dark and obscure as those of an oracle; he gave the wisest counsel, assuring them that he did not wish to intermeddle with anything; but very soon the new administration, undermined by a secret evil, fell to the ground like a tree struck at its root. The rapidity with which these governments succeeded one another was an enigma for contemporaries; it has often been brought forward by historians as a proof of the necessity which called Bonaparte to play the part of Providence in Switzer-

land. The mystery can easily be solved by interrogating facts, instead of contenting ourselves with those false appearances which governments so often throw over their most odious acts. Here again it suffices to find out the truth, to compare the complaisant fictions of the *Exposé de la situation de la république* with the secret instructions that Bonaparte addressed to his agents.

'Often,' he said, in the *Exposé* read to the Legislative Body, 'Helvetia has submitted plans of organisation to the First Consul; she has often asked his advice; he has *always reminded her of her independence.*'

'Remember only,' he sometimes said, 'the courage and acts of your fathers. Have an organisation simple as their habits and manners. . . . Above all, preserve for an example to the nations of Europe equality and liberty among this people, who first taught them to be independent and free. *These were only counsels*, and very slight attention was paid to them. Helvetia has remained without a pilot in the midst of storms. *The Minister of the Republic has shown himself to be a powerless conciliator amidst the divided parties.*'

We will now quote the instructions that he gave to this conciliator, Citizen Verninac, our representative in Helvetia. The *Exposé* which we have mentioned is dated November 22d; the instructions are of the 30th.

'Citizen Verninac *is to perform no ostensible act*, but to make it known confidentially that I am very displeased with the reactionary spirit by which the Landammans and the Little Council are actuated; that I will not suffer them to insult all the men of the Revolution, all those who have shown attachment to the Republic; that it has grieved me to see how quickly the government has forgotten the principles of moderation . . . *that this government is not legal, since the Legislative Body had not the right to overthrow the Diet;* that, moreover, the Legislative Body is only composed of sixteen members, and that *it would be making a sport of nations to suppose that France will recognise the voice of sixteen individuals as representing the wishes of the Helvetic people*,' etc. etc.

These scruples, so novel in a man who had made the

18th Brumaire, attacked the administration of Aloys Reding, a chivalrous and generous spirit, who had fought for the independence of his country, and who was just then highly popular.

'Citizen Verninac,' continued Bonaparte, 'is to say publicly and on every occasion *that the present Government can only be considered as provisional*, and make them feel that not only the French Government does not approve of it, but is not at all satisfied with its composition and its acts. *This is to be done without writing, without printing, and without noise.*'[1]

Such was the real worth of this policy of abstention and of pacific intentions of the *conciliator* Verninac. Reding came to Paris to attempt to come to an understanding with the First Consul; but he only obtained general assurances for the liberty and happiness of his countrymen, with promises of support, which were translated by secret but incessant attacks on the part of Verninac.[2] 'You are, it is true,' wrote Bonaparte to him, 'without organisation, without government, without national expression. *Why do not your countrymen make an effort?*'[3] Reding was not a man to understand this *effort* in the way the First Consul wished; he was therefore quickly overthrown, and the same fate befell all his successors, until Bonaparte, impatient at the slowness of perception in a people who were insensible to the advantage of his supreme mediation, had it decreed by his own creatures, and then practically imposed it upon them at the head of an army.

Affairs required much less caution in Italy, where the people had long been trained to docility; it was there consequently that Bonaparte had resolved to press the accomplishment of the event which was designed as a hint and a stimulant to France. In order to facilitate the accomplishment of this project, he had purposely maintained the institutions of the Cisalpine in a provisional state, so that every one longed for a more settled government.

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, November 30, 1801.
[2] *Histoire de la Confédération Suisse*, par Jean de Muller, vol. xvii.
[3] Bonaparte to Aloys Reding, February 6, 1802.

When the time came, a report was spread throughout the province of Milan that a more solid and durable order of things was about to be introduced into the Cisalpine; that the Italians were at last going to know better days; to be called upon to prove by their patriotism whether they deserved the name of a free people; that the First Consul was engaged, in concert with some of their most eminent citizens, in completing his work by giving laws to the Republic which was the daughter of his genius; that he was about to carry out plans patiently formed for their independence. Reports of the same kind were spread in Genoa, where he had also prevented the establishment of any definite government. Bonaparte had in fact called to Paris four or five of the most influential men in the Cisalpine, among others Melzi, Serbelloni, and Marescalchi. For the sake of form, he had submitted to them the plan of the new constitution that he proposed for their Republic. This constitution, drawn up by Talleyrand under Bonaparte's dictation during the month of September 1801, was sent September 30th by a special courier to the Consulte of Milan, who were to discuss it *secretly*,[1] and who hastened to register it. A few days later the Cisalpine learned that at last she had institutions.

The new constitution, faint image of the Consular *régime*, established as the basis of the whole system an electoral body, composed of three colleges, the *possidenti*, the *dotti*, and the *commercianti*, counting in all seven hundred electors. The list of names of the Cisalpine electoral body found room in *a page and a half of the Moniteur*.[2] Upon this shadow of suffrage rested the executive powers, which were not less weak and feeble. A Commission of Censure, charged to watch over the maintenance of the constitution and to nominate to certain posts, vaguely recalled the French Senate; a Consulte answered to the Council of State; a Legislative Council to the Tribunate; lastly, the Legislative Body was much like its French namesake. But they had restricted the functions of these different assemblies

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, September 29, 1801.
[2] *Moniteur* of January 31, 1802.

in Italy still more than in France, in order to increase the executive power, which was concentrated in the hands of a president by whose side was a vice-president, a personage even more insignificant than a Second Consul.[1] This simplification, which effaced every remaining vestige of a liberal element, exactly represented the changes that the First Consul was meditating in French institutions. In speaking to Italy, the Solon of the Cisalpine wished especially to be heard in France.

As soon as the constitution was accepted it was necessary to proceed to the nomination of the authorities, and this was the moment that Bonaparte had chosen to appear as the *deus ex machinâ*. Supplicated by the Cisalpine Government to make the nominations himself,[2] he wrote to express his embarrassment: 'How was he to name from memory the most fitting men for more than sixteen hundred posts? He could only do so by knowing the wishes of all the orders and all the classes of the Republic. Let them think of some means of arranging a meeting.'[3]

The most natural means was a visit from the First Consul to Milan; but to bring the representatives of all classes of the Cisalpine into France in the depth of winter appeared to him a far better means of giving a grand idea of his power and astonishing the public mind by the novelty of the spectacle. However submissive France may have been to him, she had not yet assumed the attitude and tone of a conquered nation; he took care, therefore, not to lose this opportunity of communicating to the French the contagion of Italian adulation. Pétiet, our agent in the Cisalpine, was directed to insinuate to the inhabitants that the town of Lyons, situated half-way between Milan and Paris, seemed the most suitable place for such a meeting; and this direct invitation was immediately accepted as an order by these republicans, who had so long been accustomed to understand a hint.

[1] *Procès-verbal des opérations de la Consulte*, in the *Moniteur* of January 31, 1802.

[2] The 8th of October.

[3] Bonaparte to the Committee of the Cisalpine, October 31, 1801.

In consequence of this resolution, the most important personages of the Cisalpine, to the number of about four hundred and fifty, passed the Alps in the middle of the most inclement season, in order to meet the First Consul at the appointed place. Every one of any consideration in North Italy, either by intelligence, rank, or wealth, met at Lyons in the early part of January 1802. Bonaparte did not arrive till the 11th, having kept them waiting as became a sovereign. He was enthusiastically received by the people of Lyons, and by the Italians with almost royal honours. First he endeavoured to please them by the simplicity of his manners, the heartiness of his welcome, the condescending attention he paid to their observations upon the constitution, and upon the choice of their authorities. Then, in concert with them, he proceeded to the nominations. The secondary posts were soon filled; a single place was purposely left vacant, that of President. Bonaparte from the beginning had reserved this for himself, but, faithful to his habits of dissimulation, he would not ask for it; he hoped it would be spontaneously offered to him by the enthusiasm of the Italians. These men, who had seriously believed in his promises, and who had no idea of his secret wishes, had cast their eyes on Count Melzi, the most considerable and influential inhabitant of Lombardy. As, after long hesitations, these naïf negotiators did not understand the persistent objections made to their successive propositions, it became necessary to unmask the artifice and teach them that they were not come to Lyons merely for their own pleasure, but for the greater glory of their legislator. The confidants of the First Consul, Talleyrand, Pétiet, and Marescalchi, undertook to enlighten them; and thanks to this revelation, which came so seasonably to help their enthusiasm, they were at length able to fix their fate.

They came to Bonaparte with an address, in which, disparaging themselves, they declared that they had been unable to find in their own country a citizen who, by the influence of his name and character, was fit to govern their Republic and capable of maintaining it. They therefore

entreated him to honour the Cisalpine by retaining the supreme function, and by not disdaining to think of their affairs in the midst of those of France (January 25th, 1802).[1]

The next day Bonaparte came in great pomp to announce to them that he accepted the office, without taking any superfluous trouble to spare their humiliation: '*I have not found any one among you*,' he brutally told them, '*who merits the confidence of the public, who is sufficiently independent of local prejudices, who has, in short, rendered services enough to his country to trust him with the chief magistracy.*' This was clearly telling them that he held it of his own accord. He next gave them some advice and the assurance of his protection; then he informed them of the selections he had made; among others, that of Count Melzi for the Vice-Presidency. Several speakers followed, all of whom celebrated his praise. 'If the hand *that has created us*,' said Prina, 'will undertake to guide us, no obstacle can stop us; and our confidence ought to be equal to the admiration which we feel for the hero to whom we owe our happiness.' Such expressions were equivalent to the *Divus Augustus* of the Italy of the Cæsars. When this was said, the mission of the Consulte was at an end. This singular convention held on foreign ground, which resembled a captivity or an emigration more than a civic mandate, was a sad augury for the future of the Cisalpine: it terminated in a manner quite unforeseen by the majority of those who had entered upon it with so much joy; but the disappointment was concealed under flattery. Thus Italy, so long trodden under foot and enslaved by us, avenged herself by teaching us lessons of servitude.

A word, a word devoid of any actual meaning, had nevertheless consoled the Italian patriots for their humiliation in the last sitting of the Consulte: it was the substitution of the name *Italian* Republic for that of *Cisalpine*

[1] *Rapport de la Commission des Trente, signé Stregelli,—Procès-verbal des opérations de la Consulte. Moniteur* of January 30 and 31, 1802.

Republic; satisfaction given in word to sentiments that Bonaparte took care not to encourage by act. It would have been easy, had he wished it, to have given solid pledges to this hope of an Italian regeneration; but he never allowed it to appear unless it could be useful to himself. He had in his hands all that was necessary to found a great State in North Italy. Genoa had just addressed to him a petition similar to that of the Cisalpine; he held her at his discretion; he had also at his disposal that Republic of Lucca which he had offered to Spain as the price of a few vessels; his agent, Moreau de Saint-Méry, governed it; he occupied Piedmont, whose fate was still in suspense, though it was in reality united to France; lastly, the death of the duke of Parma was foreseen, and he was already preparing to seize the duchy: all these elements, united to the Cisalpine, would have constituted a great and powerful republic, the foundation of which would certainly have raised a great deal of opposition in Europe, but an opposition less violent than that caused by their annexation to France. Such a republic would have had, in fact, a constant tendency to independence; this would have tranquillised Europe, but it was not a prospect likely to tempt Bonaparte.

He was therefore only using vain words to delude the inhabitants of the Cisalpine when he authorised them to give their republic the name of the Italian country. Far from entering into their views, he henceforth only sought to maintain the small Italian States in an isolated state, and to bring them definitely under French rule. He acted in the same manner with regard to the kingdom of Etruria, which he had so singularly ceded to Spain '*en toute propriété*,' and over which he reigned as absolute sovereign through Clarke and Murat, under pretext of directing the first steps of the young king. We see by his correspondence that he arranged everything, nominated persons to the most important posts in the administration and in the army, regulated the pay and composition of the troops, and even fixed the number of cannon to be kept in each stronghold.[1]

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, September 25; to Berthier, *ibid.*

Tuscany was now nothing more than a French possession, where, however, conquest was less compromising because it was better disguised.

In order to judge of the effect that all these invasions must have produced on the minds of the different Powers, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that they were not successive, as they are generally represented, but contemporary and simultaneous. If all were not completed at the same time, which would have appeared too flagrant a usurpation; if, for example, the Batavian reorganisation was prior to the Helvetic mediation; if the mock constitution of the Cisalpine preceded that of Genoa or the incorporation of Piedmont, all these acts were begun, continued, announced at the same time by unequivocal manifestations, which formed a strange contrast to our incessantly renewed engagements to respect the independence of these republics.

The First Consul, moreover, felt so strongly that this policy would not bear the test of discussion, that when the Conference was opened at Amiens between Joseph and Lord Cornwallis, his first care was to stipulate that all these questions should be excluded from the debate. At the opening of the negotiations he wrote to Joseph: 'You are to regard it as understood that the French Government will listen to nothing about the king of Sardinia, nor the Stadtholder, *nor anything concerning the internal affairs of Batavia, of Germany, of Helvetia, or of the Republics of Italy.* None of these subjects have anything to do with our discussions with England. And the little that was said upon some of them, in the course of negotiations for the preliminaries, proves sufficiently that we must on no pretext revert to them now.'[1]

This was saying in other words that what took place in Europe concerned England no more: it was a singular illusion to hope for such a renunciation from her. This systematic omission, however, suited England equally well, for she had positive need of a time of rest and momentary repose; consequently, without approving of

[1] Talleyrand to Joseph, November 20, 1801.

what the French Government was accomplishing in these different States at its own risk and peril, she consented to pass over in silence the changes that were taking place, convinced that she could neither sanction them nor oppose them for the present. Owing to this reservation, the true meaning of which neither party could mistake, the ground for negotiations was at once cleared of the only real obstacles to the conclusion of peace. In the impossibility of coming to an agreement on these complicated questions they resolved to ignore them, and to act as if they did not exist. For they could not deceive themselves; the moment they acknowledged their existence it would be necessary to take up arms again. Such was the significance of the treaty of Amiens. They consented to place before the public these formulas of peace which were so anxiously longed for, but they did so with the firm conviction that upon such a basis only a truce could be signed.

In consequence of this determination not to speak of anything that could cause division or irritation, the object of the negotiations was considerably simplified. There remained nothing to settle beyond the disputes relative to the exercise of the right of fishing, the payment of supplies furnished to prisoners; lastly, the reconstruction of the Order of Malta, the only question of real importance. The affair of Malta, though secondary to the suppressed questions, revealed the deep mistrust which separated the two Powers, in spite of their pacific protestations. Bonaparte had been the first to propose the protectorship of Russia for the reorganised Order. But, since he no longer hoped to govern Alexander as he had governed Paul, he had become indifferent to this idea. He now suggested that Malta should be placed under the patronage of the king of Naples, a prince whom he was henceforth sure to rule, being the real master of the rest of Italy. Convinced by experience that in the actual state of our navy, though he could easily seize the island by a *coup-de-main*, it would be impossible to hold it, he demanded that the fortifications should be demolished, and that they should be replaced by an entrepot and a lazaretto. On the other hand, the

English made a stand for a restoration pure and simple of the Order, under the guarantee of the Czar, striking out of its statutes all that was obsolete, and adding English knights to those already existing, in order to counterbalance French influence.[1] Both parties felt that these arrangements were only provisional; and each secretly intended to seize the first opportunity of retaking this valuable strategic point, or at least of rendering it useless to his adversary.

At the same time that Bonaparte was deluding Europe with the treaty of Amiens, and riveting the yoke more firmly on nations who had previously been simply united to us, and our clients rather than our subjects, he was pursuing at Paris with still more energy and activity the plans that he had conceived for the increase of a power which was nothing in his eyes so long as it was not entirely concentrated in his own hands. Since the discussion on special tribunals and the conclusion of the Concordat, the projects of the First Consul were no longer a mystery for any one. They were revealed in all his acts, he was working harder than ever at a monarchical restoration. Doubt on this point was no longer possible; the most moderate men were obliged to give up the defence of a policy whose aim was so clear. After the insulting sally of Français de Nantes in the Tribunate, the pacific Daunou had quitted the Assembly, declaring 'that he would not enter it again until tyranny had ceased.' His discontent, shared by a great number of the members of the Tribunate and of the Legislative Body, but manifested by only a very small fraction of these two assemblies, had ended by reaching the Senate itself, notwithstanding the interest that these men had in covering everything with invariable approbation. Sieyès, the President of the Senate, weary of his princely idleness, humiliated by a position of which the honours did not disguise the insignificance, ill resigned to this anticipation of death, notwithstanding that he had received the price of it, together with all the Senators who had retained any dignity of character or any attachment to liberty, Destutt

[1] Conference of December 28: *Négotiations relatives au traité d'Amiens, par Du Casse.*

de Tracy, Volney, Cabanis, Lanjuinais, Garat, Lambrecht, consoled themselves for their close sittings by criticising in private meetings the steps of the Government, which it was impossible for them to hinder. The plots of this inoffensive group only consisted in drawing-room conversations, held most frequently at Auteuil, either at Madame Helvétius', or at Madame de Condorcet's. What, after all, could this minority of ideologists do, even in concert with the malcontents of the Legislative Body and of the Tribunate? Obtain the nomination of one candidate instead of another, modify or throw out a few bills, and that was all. Far from being subversive or factious, they scarcely meditated legal resistance, in the usual meaning of the word. To preserve the remains of existing guarantees, to hinder, if they could, a fresh usurpation; their wishes went no further.

As for the opponents in the Legislative Body and in the Tribunate, facts had amply proved that, if they possessed the esteem of these assemblies, they had very little influence on their votes. Too weak and disarmed to nourish any thoughts of aggression, their only ambition was to maintain a shadow of control in the Republic. They neither wished to seize the reins of government nor to hinder its action, but simply to restrain it; they did not try to dictate new laws, but to enforce respect to those which it had itself made and sworn to. Among all these malcontents, if we except Barras, who was isolated, powerless, and discredited, there was not a single one who thought of overthrowing the Consular power. Even the opponents in the army, who by their calling were naturally more easily led to carry thought into action, dreamed of nothing of the kind. Their grievances were generally of a totally different nature. Ignorant for the most part of the very notion of liberty, military men are always ready to proclaim a dictatorship, which possesses in their eyes the merit of applying to States the discipline of armies. Bonaparte's companions had passionately applauded the 18th Brumaire, in which they saw a pledge of their own elevation; but the more clear-sighted had soon discovered what a distance this success had placed between themselves and him. They had

flattered themselves that the ancient equality would be maintained, and they could not give up their dream without regret. Of all his acts, the Concordat contributed the most to dispel this illusion, and for this reason it wounded them the most deeply. Aware of his real feelings on religious matters, and accustomed to treat this subject with him, not only with the most perfect freedom, but with all the contempt of the soldier for the priest, they could see nothing in the Concordat but the aspirations of private ambition. Some of them openly expressed their displeasure; these were his old lieutenants of the army of Italy, such as Lannes or Augereau, men little to be feared. Lannes, treated like a spoiled child, was sent as ambassador to Portugal, and his half-disgrace made some stir.

The army of the Rhine was the centre of more serious though less noisy discontent. Its officers were in general better educated than those of the army of Italy; they were also more liberal. They were sincerely attached to republican institutions, and witnessed their ruin with grief; but their disapprobation was only displayed by their attitude of cold reserve. Moreau, their chief, less and less satisfied with the state of affairs, but fearing lest his dissatisfaction should be attributed to motives of rivalry or of personal ambition, contented himself with keeping aloof, disdaining favours that so many others disputed, rarely expressing blame, but more odious by this silence and abstention than he would have been by even extravagant demonstrations; opposing, in short, the simple and proud dignity of his life to the borrowed splendour of the new Court.

If we add to these different elements of opposition the slight antipathies of some ancient members of the Jacobin party, since rallied round the Government, such as Réal, Fouché, Truguet, Thibaudeau, who felt a repugnance, not for the dictatorship—for no concentration of power alarmed them, provided it recalled to their memory the Revolution—but for the forms and names which reminded them of royalty, we have a complete idea of the kind of obstacles that the authority of the First Consul had to dread. Not only was there no cohesion in all these elements, which

alone could have rendered them dangerous, but these men were by no means animated by systematic hostility, and he had merely to abandon the designs which were so naturally attributed to him in order to conciliate them. He only sought to get rid of them by force and craft. He resolved to take advantage of the first pretext to strike the opposition of the Tribunate, either by dissolving it or by withdrawing bills in order to let it perish from inanition; for the means he intended to follow were not yet determined in his mind. As for the opposition in the army of the Rhine, he freed himself of it by the expedition to Saint Domingo.

Here we must guard against an unjust and erroneous appreciation. It has been repeatedly said that Bonaparte sent the army of the Rhine to Saint Domingo with the firm belief that it would never return. This is an affirmation that the strongest proof alone would make admissible; now it rests on a presumption quite insufficient to constitute a certainty, or even a probability. Than that he thought of sending the army of the Rhine away nothing is more evident or more certain. The fact speaks loudly enough; moreover, he explained his intention in covert but expressive terms in the proclamation in which he announced the expedition to Saint Domingo: 'If there still remain,' he said, 'men tormented with the desire to hate their fellow-citizens, or exasperated by the remembrance of their hopes, vast countries await them; let them venture to go there, and seek riches and the oblivion of their sorrows and misfortunes. The eyes of their compatriots will follow them with affection; they will support their valour!'[1] The expedition therefore was in his eyes a kind of issue for the ambition and ardour that he would not satisfy in France. Than that he was aware of the fatal effects of this climate, and the other difficulties in the subjection of the island, nothing is more certain; with regard to this, he received sufficient information from Colonel Vincent, who was even disgraced for his frankness. But though he deemed the enterprise painful and dangerous, he believed it was practi-

[1] Proclamation at the anniversary of the 18th Brumaire.

cable; it was connected in his mind with the acquisition of Louisiana, and the praiseworthy ambition of restoring our colonial power.

He did not then, as has been said, *send* the army of the Rhine *to perish* at Saint Domingo; he only saw in the expedition an opportunity of removing to a distance the focus of a troublesome opposition. But this glorious army nevertheless perished by the fault of Bonaparte; perished by his obstinacy and want of foresight; perished in an enterprise iniquitous by its aim, odious by the means employed, fatal and shameful by its results. Scarcely emerged from the convulsions which had accompanied and followed its liberation, the island of Saint Domingo rose from its ruins under the firm and intelligent guidance of a black, in whom to their great surprise Europeans had been compelled to recognise a man. In the course of a few years, Toussaint Louverture, by a happy mixture of severity and kindness, had re-established all the elements of a civilised society among these rebel slaves, who had become incapable of discipline and were on the point of sinking back into a savage state. He had put an end to civil war, revived industry and commerce, recalled the former proprietors to their estates, reorganised justice and administration. Jealous for the independence of his Republic, he had driven the English and Spanish troops out of the island. Our representatives, from Santhonax to Hédouville, had been powerless spectators of the discords which he had happily brought to an end; our sovereignty over Saint Domingo had remained purely nominal; Toussaint had hastened to recognise it and render homage to it, but with the perfectly legitimate ambition of maintaining it as a purely honorary office. He had lately sent to Bonaparte the constitution of his republic, in order to obtain for it the Consular ratification. To live independent under the protection of France, to receive her planters, her commercial men, and her naval officers, to accord them all the privileges compatible with the safety and the liberty of the island—such was at that time the dream of the republic that Toussaint Louverture

had in so short a time raised to the highest pitch of prosperity.

This was the situation of the colony at the time when, for the single purpose of domination, and in opposition to the advice of all competent men, Bonaparte decided to let loose upon it all the devastation of a pitiless war. In order clearly to understand the motives by which he was actuated—and compared to which the various turns of the expedition are only secondary—it is necessary to examine closely all the papers relating to the affair. They first endeavoured to tranquillise the English with regard to the object of the expedition. Talleyrand received orders to explain by a note,[1] that in this enterprise the French Government was guided 'less by financial and commercial considerations than by the necessity to stifle in every part of the world all germs of inquietude and trouble.'[2] At the present day it would be called the regeneration of Saint Domingo. He added, in order to pacify them more completely, 'that if we had recognised the organisation of Saint Domingo, *the sceptre of the New World would sooner or later have fallen into the hands of the blacks.*' He must have supposed that the English Cabinet had sunk into a state of imbecility, if he thought they were accessible to such fears, and these had nothing to do with their determination. But without unduly exaggerating the danger of negro domination, the English had a great many grievances against Toussaint Louverture, whose example might sooner or later find imitators; moreover, they were not sorry to see us engaged in a struggle of which they knew the perils better than we did. They therefore made no opposition to the expedition; they contented themselves with keeping watch over it, with an almost insulting but justifiable distrust. In the note we have just mentioned, Bonaparte clearly announced his intention '*of annihilating the govern-*

[1] This does not prevent Napoleon from declaring in his *Mémoires*, with his habitual veracity, '*that there were neither notes, conferences, nor negotiations with England, relative to the expedition to Saint Domingo.*'—Notes et Mélanges dictés à Montholon.

[2] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, November 13th.

ment of the blacks.' He added, in order to obtain the acquiescence of the English to his project, that '*if the Government were to recognise and legalise the liberty of the blacks at Saint Domingo*, it would be a *point-d'appui* for the Republic in the New World.' He proposed then to destroy this liberty also, since he boasted of his intentions to the English Cabinet, which was at that time favourable to slavery. But how different was his language in the letter he addressed at the same time to Toussaint Louverture: 'We have conceived real esteem for you,' he wrote, 'and we have much pleasure in proclaiming the great services that you have rendered to the French people. If their flag floats over Saint Domingo, it is to you and to the brave blacks that it is due. Called by your talents and the force of circumstances to the chief command, you have caused civil war to cease; you have put a stop to persecution by savage men, brought honour back to religion and God, from whom all things spring. The constitution that you have framed, while it comprises many good things, contains others that are opposed to the dignity and the sovereignty of the French people. . . . The circumstances in which you were placed rendered certain articles of this constitution legitimate which would not otherwise have been so. But now that circumstances have so happily changed, you will be the first to render homage to the sovereignty of the nation that reckons you among the number of its most illustrious citizens, by the services that you have rendered, and by the talents and strength of character with which nature has endowed you. Any other conduct than this would be irreconcilable with the idea we have conceived of you. . . . What do you wish for? *The liberty of the blacks?* You know that in every country we have given it to people who did not possess it.'[1]

In this letter he no longer speaks of destroying the government of the blacks, nor of touching their liberty, but only of modifying certain articles of the constitution of Saint Domingo, and of re-establishing the sovereignty of France.

[1] Bonaparte to General Toussaint Louverture, November 18, 1801.

It is true that this letter was sent by Captain-General Leclerc, at the head of twenty or twenty-five thousand men, a circumstance sufficiently significant. Bonaparte said, in his *Exposé de la situation de la République*, 'There are no slaves now either at Saint Domingo or at Guadaloupe: all are free, all will remain free. At Martinique it is different. Martinique has preserved slavery, and slavery will be preserved there.'

With all these contradictory declarations, which however are far from having an equal value, the most natural idea is to refer to the instructions given to General Leclerc. But these instructions have never been published, for reasons which are easily understood.[1] All that is known is, that in spite of the excessive severity he employed at Saint Domingo, Leclerc did not carry out all his orders. Napoleon formally reproaches him with this in his *Mémoires;* but whilst reproaching him for his disobedience, he takes care not to reveal the true motive. He assures us that Leclerc had orders simply to arrest and send to Europe all black officers above the rank of commander: Toussaint Louverture, he adds, would have served in France *as General of a Division*, and the other chiefs would have been admitted into the army according to their rank. It is useless to point out the improbability of this last assertion; as to the first, it just lifts a corner of the veil. Fortunately, we can, to a certain extent, supply the omission. In his correspondence with Leclerc, the First Consul several times alludes to these instructions; and the little that he says gives a full idea of what they were to all who have studied his character. Shortly after the departure of the expedition, March 16th, 1802, Bonaparte wrote to Leclerc: 'Follow implicitly my instructions, *and as soon as you have got rid of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and when the mass* of the blacks are disarmed, send back to the con-

[1] It must not be forgotten that, by a memorable declaration, the omissions and curtailments which are remarked in the *Correspondance de Napoléon* have been made in accordance with what would have been the wishes of Napoleon himself, had he been able to superintend this publication.

tinent all the negroes and coloured men who have played any part in the civil troubles.'[1]

This is the fate he reserved in his instructions for the *illustrious citizen* for whom he professed so much esteem, and this is what he meant by 'changing some articles of the constitution.' The expression 'get rid of Toussaint' (*se défaire de Toussaint*), the meaning of which is very clear in the correspondence, is changed in the *Mémoires* into the rank of a General of a Division.

With regard to slavery, we can judge of this question by method of induction. Every one knows that he hastened to re-establish it wherever he succeeded in re-establishing his authority; but that does not prove, it is said, that he had the intention of doing so at the commencement of the expedition.[2] It is very difficult to believe that he who restored to slavery its former legal existence which our legislation had abolished, not only in Martinique, but at Tabago, at Santa Lucia, at Guiana, in the Isle of France and of Réunion, would have made an exception at Saint Domingo and in Guadaloupe, where it would have been dangerous to the security of our colonies; but more than this, the manner in which he regarded and fulfilled this engagement with respect to Guadaloupe abundantly proves that he never entertained the idea of keeping his promise as far as Saint Domingo was concerned. The re-establishment of slavery was from the beginning settled in his mind, but he felt it was necessary to move from step to step, and this project was only to be unmasked gradually. The expedition to Guadaloupe did not take place until the end of May 1802. Bonaparte, after having vainly pressed the far-seeing Bernadotte to accept the command, gave it to Richepanse, Moreau's lieutenant, an incomparable officer, whose glorious life deserved a less miserable end than to be cut off by yellow fever. It was by the hands of such a

[1] 'General Leclerc,' writes M. Thiers, alluding to that subject, 'had instructions to *soothe Toussaint*, to offer him the post of lieutenant of France, the confirmation of the rank and property acquired by his officers, the guarantee of the liberty of the blacks.'

[2] Bignon.

man that Bonaparte had resolved to re-establish slavery in Guadaloupe in contempt of his most solemn declarations.

But he thought it would be better to wait until Richepanse had arrived in the island before he informed him of the work he had reserved for him. About six weeks after his departure, July 13, 1802, he ordered Decrès, Minister of the Navy, to write to him: 'By adding to these measures the recommendation to use the greatest activity in sending reinforcements of troops from one colony to another, according to necessity, we shall be perfectly tranquil and at the same time in a position to take all the measures we may judge fit for the colonies. *The first appears to be to re-establish slavery in Guadaloupe, as it was in Martinique, taking care to keep this measure perfectly secret, and leaving to General Richepanse the choice of the moment for publishing it.*'

This recommendation, the note to the English Cabinet, the perfidious acts and the atrocious cruelty which dishonoured our expedition to Saint Domingo, clearly point out what were the instructions given to General Leclerc relative to slavery. To subdue the island by terror or by force, to disarm the blacks, to bribe their principal chiefs, to transport the others—such was the beginning of a plan which would, of necessity, be crowned by slavery. These calculations were not crowned with success. Never did more disastrous results follow a more perverse policy: but, as it usually happens, the instruments alone bore the weight of expiation—a law of history which ought to guard men against their inexhaustible complaisance for those who dispose so lightly of their destinies. Thirty-five thousand men were sent to Saint Domingo: scarcely more than two or three thousand returned. As for the hero of the black race, we know now that, drawn into an ambush by General Leclerc, who acted with a heavy heart in accordance with the reiterated injunctions of Bonaparte, he was sent to France and shut up in the freezing dungeons of the fort of Joux, where he perished at the end of a few months. Toussaint Louverture could die, for he had done a great work, he had proved to the world that negroes are men,

and men capable of governing themselves, a faculty which whites had hitherto refused to acknowledge in them. *A natural death*—assert our historians, referring to the reports to which this premature death gave rise—as if the prolonged sufferings to which this son of the tropics was subjected were not a thousand times more cruel than a legal execution! But what is the obscure agony of a poor negro for the maudlin narrators of the ostentatious martyrdom at Saint Helena? It is true that the just future will perhaps say of one of these men that he was the redeemer of his race, and of the other that he was the scourge of his.

CHAPTER VI

THE PURGING OF THE TRIBUNATE—THE CIVIL CODE—THE LEGION OF HONOUR—THE CONSULATE FOR LIFE

It is time to relate how the First Consul, after having got rid of the malcontents of the army of the Rhine, freed himself of a still more troublesome opposition,—I mean that of the Tribunate and of the Legislative Body. That he had for a long time determined to crush it is certain; he had many times spoken freely of his intention, but he had settled nothing with regard to the mode of acting; this was to depend on circumstances. The session of the Year X (1801-1802) was opened on the 22d of November, just when the army of the Rhine was embarking for Saint Domingo. The ceremony had been performed with a certain amount of solemnity, it had been inaugurated by salutes of the artillery, and the Minister of the Interior, preceded by two messengers of state, had presented himself in the chamber of the Legislative Body. This unusual form was no homage rendered to the representatives of the nation; it was observed merely to give additional splendour to what the minister called 'the closing of the temple of Janus,' that is to say, to the registering of the treaties of the peace which the Government had just concluded with the states of Europe; for although the First Consul refused to admit the right of ratification which the constitution had given to the Legislative Body, he had not been able to dispense with the form of submitting them to it. The next day Thibaudeau read to the Assembly that *Exposé de la situation de la République* of which we have already examined some passages—a huge illusory picture, where everything

was sacrificed for effect, and in which the best-known facts were audaciously misrepresented, whenever there was an interest in doing so. It is impossible to deny the grandeur of the results enumerated: but as they contained no guarantee of duration or stability, we can only regard them as evidence of a glory more fictitious than real, and as arrangements made to please the eye. The Government announced in its *Exposé* the conclusion of the treaties, the presentation of the Concordat, that of the civil code, and of a bill relative to the reorganisation of public instruction, —a magnificent programme, proof of the activity of a man of genius, but of an activity that was hurried and jealous, suffering neither collaboration nor control, ascribing all to itself, and thus rendering the work sterile for want of wisdom, maturity, and disinterestedness.

The Legislative Body had elected for their president Dupuis, the author of *L'Origine de tous les Cultes*, and this nomination was regarded as a sign of opposition to the Concordat. The deputation charged with complimenting the Consuls on the *Exposé* chose the Abbé Grégoire for their spokesman: this choice was also considered as a significant manifestation. Both were, however, extremely moderate, and Grégoire confined himself in his speech to expressing after the usual compliments the perfectly legitimate desire for a pacific policy. 'The nations, fatigued with sanguinary discords,' said he, 'undeceived with regard to ideas of false grandeur, feeling the need of loving each other and uniting together, extend their fraternal hands. Woe to those who should attempt to found their prosperity on the disaster of others!' In the following sittings the Government presented successively the first titles of the civil code and the different treaties concluded with the Powers. All these treaties, with one exception, had been almost unanimously approved, and without contradiction. The treaty that had been concluded with Russia raised a somewhat violent opposition in the Tribunate. One of the articles, which was moreover very badly drawn up, contained the following clause:—

Art. 3. 'The two contracting parties mutually promise

to allow none *of their subjects* to hold any communication whatever with the internal enemies of the existing government of the two States, to spread principles contrary to their respective constitutions, or to foment troubles; and in consequence of this arrangement, any subject of either of the two Powers who, sojourning on the territory of the other, should endanger its security, will be immediately sent out of the said country, and transported beyond the frontier, without being able in any case to claim the protection of his government.'

In the first place this article was very obscure, for it seemed in some passages to refer to the plots of foreign residents against the government of the country in which they had settled, and in this case it was useless; in others to the plots of refugees against the government which had proscribed them, and in this case it was ungenerous. It contained moreover a formal repudiation of all precedents in republican diplomacy,—a repudiation too important not to have been deliberate. The French Republic had never admitted the use of the word 'subject' to designate French citizens. In all previous treaties, the formula *citizens and subjects* had been substituted for this expression, and the Consular Government had conformed to the custom in their other transactions. When the tribune Thibault interrupted the reading of the treaty to point out this innovation, adding 'that the French were citizens and not subjects,' his colleagues replied almost in one voice, 'that it was an error of the copyist;'[1] others begged him to reserve his remarks till the time of discussion. How untrue it is therefore to say that the scene had been concerted. There was neither agitation nor tumult, but a simple observation made with propriety and listened to with calmness.

A few days later, Costaz made his report in the name of the commission charged to examine the treaty. He acknowledged that the use of the word 'subject' was unwonted, that the French Republic had always excluded it from its protocols, that this appellation was unsuitable and ill-sounding, although, according to the Dictionary of the

[1] *Archives parlementaires: Séance du* 30 *Novembre.*

Academy, one might say subjects of a republic as well as subjects of a monarchy. But he had received, he said, some explanations from the Government; the article in question had been prepared principally to meet the case of *emigrants who, having been admitted into the Russian service, might take advantage of their foreign uniform to enter France as Russian subjects, in contempt of the magistrates.* Such cases might lead to explanations between the two Governments that are always disagreeable, and often contain the germs of misunderstanding.'[1]

The improbability of this contingency, against which it was moreover superfluous to provide, rendered the explanation decisive. The truth was that the obscurity that had been purposely imparted to the article covered a shameful bargain, by virtue of which Bonaparte promised to deliver up the Polish refugees to Russia, on condition that the Czar did the same with the French emigrants. Costaz said that the article was partly directed against the emigrants residing in Russia, who were keeping up a correspondence with the enemies of the French Government at home, and that was why he thought they ought not to give them the title of citizens. He went further, and pretended that the stipulation was not reciprocal, 'for,' he said, 'there were French in Russia inimically organised against the Government of the Republic. . . . But have we found Russians in France employed in destroying the Government of their country?' The reporter feigned not to understand that the article touched the thousands of proscribed Poles who were fighting in our ranks waiting for chance to give them an opportunity of trying to reconquer their country; but this abandonment, consented to, though it was not openly expressed, was not less cowardly nor less ungrateful. The Commission of the Tribunate accordingly *unanimously* adopted the treaty.[2]

[1] *Séance du 6 Décembre.*

[2] M. Thiers, who constantly speaks of the *violence* of the Tribunate, —violence of which we find no trace in the official reports of this Assembly—here says that 'the treaty was the subject of the most *violent discussions* in the Commission of the Tribunate.' Nevertheless they unanimously voted Costaz's inoffensive report.

The next day Jard Panvilliers proposed, seeing the necessity of the greatest prudence in an affair of this importance, a private conference of the tribunes. 'I think,' he said, 'that we ought first freely to talk over the subject, and afterwards discuss it publicly.' His proposition was adopted. It is this sort of private conversation, only known through *on dits*, and devoid of all kind of publicity, that has most often been used as the text of accusation against the Tribunate. This resolution to debate in a secret committee, in order to spare the susceptibilities of the Government that the tribunes had to control, was an excess of prudence unworthy of a free assembly, for publicity was one of its first duties towards the nation; but this act of weakness, inspired by a spirit of excessive conciliation, sufficiently proves that the tribunes were far removed from that systematic disparagement and hostility which has been so long ascribed to them on the faith of him who calumniated in order to ruin them.

With closed doors they expressed their opinions more freely, but with all the incoherence and confusion of a private conversation. What passed in these two secret meetings was only known to the public by vague, imperfect, and contradictory reports, devoid for the most part of any authentic character; it is therefore a gratuitous assertion to say 'that they produced a painful effect in Paris;'[1] for they produced no effect whatever. All that is still known of them is[2] that the discussions bore less on the article itself than on the unfortunate expression they had remarked in it.

It has been said that it was only a word; this is true, but it is events which give importance to words; and all that had taken place since the 18th Brumaire gave to this one an overwhelming meaning for republicans. This word was a ray which threw light upon a situation already established, but upon which illusions still existed; it gave

[1] Thiers.

[2] Scarcely anything more is known of these meetings than what Stanislas Girardin himself declared to the First Consul after one of the sittings, 'that the adoption of the treaty had not for *a single moment* been doubtful.'

this situation its true name, its name sealed by ancient servitude, and all generous men, who had resigned themselves to a temporary dictatorship, but who had retained in their hearts all the noble ambitions of 1789, were seized with horror and disgust at this unexpected revival of old monarchical superstitions. They protested in vain against the mystery imposed on them by a timid majority, who wished that their vote only should be known in France; but in spite of all their precautions the passage of Chénier's speech, which closed the discussion, resounded abroad like an oracle of liberty; it will remain as the judgment which the future will pass upon this period of our history: '*Our armies*,' he said, '*have fought for ten years to make us citizens, and we are become subjects. The wish of the double coalition has thus been accomplished.*'

This declaration, made in secret with closed doors and given as the expression of private opinions, was all the censure that the Tribunate ventured to pronounce against the treaty that displeased them. They only resumed their public sittings to vote, and their votes, the sole legal evidence of their feelings, were seventy-seven in favour of the treaty against *fourteen*. This is what Bonaparte and his panegyrists have called the provocations of the Tribunate; this is the kind of opposition that the First Consul declared incompatible with his own power; it was this in short that made him say, 'The tribunes are *dogs* that I meet with everywhere.'[1] What is there to be astonished at? He was on the eve of a *coup-d'état* against the senators themselves, for there was no contradiction, not even the creeping opposition of the Senate, which did not appear unbearable and dangerous to his sovereignty. Three vacancies occured in the Senate; according to the constitution, this body was to choose between candidates presented by the Tribunate, the Legislative Body, and the First Consul. The Tribunate named as their candidate for the first of the three places Desmeuniers, a man who habitually voted with the majority; the Legislative Body chose Grégoire, one of the most irreproachable characters

[1] *Journal de Stanislas Girardin.*

of the time. But the First Consul presented three candidates together, Jourdan, Lamartillière, and Berruyer; all three military men. And in order to give a more imperative character to his presentation, he added a message stating his motives for the choice, which was unconstitutional. 'The general peace was,' he said, 'an occasion for giving a testimony of national gratitude and satisfaction to the armies.'

The Senate, who felt some inclination not to resist but merely to warn, ventured to name Grégoire. The former bishop of Blois had never committed any act of opposition to the Consular Government; he had just before resigned his see with the most honourable disinterestedness, in order to facilitate negotiations with Rome. The First Consul had had recourse to his knowledge on this occasion, he had even taken the trouble to deceive him by asking for advice that he never intended to follow. Nevertheless this choice appeared to him an actual revolt on the part of an assembly that had hitherto been so docile. He broke out into threats against Sieyès, to whom he attributed this nomination. Two places still remained to be filled. The Legislative Body and the Tribunate simultaneously named Daunou, a liberal of a vigorous mind and the purest integrity, one of the most respectable men who had survived our political troubles. This double presentation gave great advantage to Daunou, and his nomination appeared certain. Bonaparte's anger now knew no bounds; addressing the Senate in the middle of a sitting, 'I declare,' he said to the senators, 'that if you name Daunou, I shall take it as a personal insult, and you know that I never suffer any.' He then attacked old Kellermann, and bullied him like a schoolboy. 'There are some among you,' he added, fixing his eyes on Sieyès, 'who want to give us a grand elector, who are thinking of a prince of the house of Orleans; the Government is watching them.'[1] Nothing was more false than this accusation, and none knew it better than Bonaparte; but it was impossible for Sieyès to protest, and he swallowed the affront in silence.

[1] *Journal et Souvenirs de Stanislas Girardin.*

Such were the insults that befell the Senate for having dared to nominate Grégoire, an inoffensive man, but one who had committed the crime of showing an independent spirit. Tiberius never treated the Roman Senate with such contempt. The senators would not expose themselves a second time to a scene which announced clearly enough what its author was capable of, and Daunou was sacrificed; but we can conceive what an accumulation of hatred such mortal humiliation would store up in the minds of men condemned to invariable adulation, and even more crushed by favours than by outrage. It is these same men that Bonaparte afterwards reproached for their ingratitude; a charge that might be called childish, if its object had not been to deceive posterity by gaining the pity of generous minds.

The Legislative Body and the Tribunate had just filled up the measure of their iniquity by throwing out, by a small majority, the first titles of the civil code. The great work of remodelling and arranging our civil laws, ordered by the Constituent, accomplished in a great measure but not completed by the Convention, adjourned by the Directory, was at last finished, and a definite code had been drawn up, after the various examinations to which it had been so wisely submitted. The Commission appointed in July 1800 had placed in a simple and logical order the articles of our laws, borrowed either from the Roman law, from ancient customs, or from the decrees of our different assemblies. They had put aside all that they found incompatible with the new principles proclaimed by the Revolution. The writings of Domat and of Pothier, the decrees of the Constituent, the two drafts of the Convention, made, one in 1793, the other in 1795, a third drawn up by Cambacérès for the Council of the Five Hundred—such were the principal elements of this amalgamation, of which the chief advantage was that it collected in one legislative code acts hitherto scattered, among which it was difficult to distinguish those that had preserved the force of law from those which had fallen into disuse. This first draft had been sent to the Tribunal de Cassation, and to all the

tribunals of appeal of the Republic, and after it had been enriched by their observations it was returned to the Legislative Section of the Council of State. Here it was again discussed, and had then been submitted to the examination of the whole Council of State. It was in this last Assembly only that the First Consul had taken any part in the discussions. Desirous of attributing to himself the honour of the enterprise, he had wished to put his hand to it. He joined in the debates by sallies of vehement and original language, of which it would be unjust to deny the force and oratorical effect; but their success was more especially due to the contrast that they formed to the grave and measured style of the jurisconsults. Initiated into a knowledge of these matters, as he had been into those of the canon law, by a few books hastily read, and by long conversations with Cambacérès and Portalis, addressing a public composed of his adherents or his familiars, contradicted only so far as to excite and give effect to his eloquence, sometimes he seemed to lead the debates that in reality he only followed, at others he interposed in the discussion by trenchant and sententious remarks; his derision, like the reserved blows in a tournament, of which the honour was offered to sovereigns, often turned the balance, though on secondary points they sometimes ventured to oppose him, which completed the illusion, and he left his simple auditors astonished at his newly-discovered erudition and penetrated by his omniscience. The next day Locré dressed up these improvisations before they were presented to the public in the *Moniteur*. Thibaudeau assures us that the alterations weakened them: it is very possible that they destroyed the picturesque energy of certain expressions, but on the other hand Locré gave them a correctness that Bonaparte never possessed in our language, and he struck out the eccentricities that would have betrayed the ignorance of the legislator.

It is moreover easy, from the official reports which have been preserved, to see what part the First Consul took in the framing of the Civil Code. While we recognise that his intervention was advantageous on some minor points,

as for instance in the provision relative to the certificates of births, deaths, and marriages, in the armies in campaign, in the determination of formalities attending the celebration of marriage,[1] in that of the guarantees contained in the title relative to absentees,[2] while we admit that he was more favourable than most of his time to the extension of testamentary liberty, though his proposition on this subject was quite impracticable, we must say that his views on the subjects of legislation in which this intervention was most conspicuous were most often inspired by suggestions of personal interest, or by political considerations which ought to have no weight with the legislator. Thus the articles which rendered divorce so easy and so frequent were carried by his influence against the wishes of the majority, who wanted to furnish the possibility of recourse to it, but to prevent its abuse. He went so far as to ask that divorce might be pronounced not only on the demand of *one of a couple*, but even for *facts not proved*, 'seeing,' he said, 'that the judgment which granted a divorce would imply dishonour if it were founded on facts proved.'[3] Nothing short of considerations of a private nature could have inspired so senseless a doctrine. The fact was, he was even then thinking of a divorce from his wife, by whom he no longer hoped to have a son; and Josephine, who suspected this, followed the discussion with an anxiety easily understood. It was remarked about the same time that he caused the civil union of several members of his family to be sanctioned by a religious marriage, while he carefully abstained from having recourse to the ceremony himself, though it had not taken place at his marriage with Josephine. Still he had not fully determined on this rupture; sometimes he thought of adopting a son. Hence the singular variation in his language on this subject in the Council of State. His first intention was to give an extraordinary solemnity to adoption,

[1] Locré: *Législation de la France*, t. iii. Locré: *Procès-verbaux du Conseil d'Etat*, t. i.: *Séances des* 16 *et* 24 *Fructidor, an* IX.

[2] Locré: *Législation de la France*, t. xi.

[3] Locré: *Procès-verbaux du Conseil d'Etat*, t. i.: *Séance du* 14 *Vendémiaire, an* X.

to make it a sort of creative act, sanctioned by the legislative power, and marked by a sacred prestige: 'This act was to come *like lightning* from on high. The legislator would intervene as the grand pontiff, amid the most august ceremonies!' Words which well express his taste for the marvellous and the theatrical, but which also show that he was thinking of himself, for if he loved effect, it was not for others. But the following year, when the Code was again taken up, this passing fancy had vanished; adoption, having no longer any interest for him, was to be nothing more than a simple transmission of name and property.[1]

Such humours, it must be owned, were very insufficient elements for making a great jurisconsult. It was the same with regard to the maintenance of the civil death of emigrants, an article that Tronchet wished to class among administrative measures, and that Bonaparte tried to get into the Code, although he was on the eve of proclaiming the amnesty of the emigrants. Everywhere and in everything the interest of his power and even of his person ranked with social interests, and as the first often changed, it followed that the law was to be in an incessant state of metamorphose.

In general, when the First Consul touched upon practical subjects, of which men who have worked hard and seen and compared things are naturally competent judges, he displayed the superiority of his genius; but it is unnecessary to add that this could never supply the deficiency of really technical knowledge. When he launches out into problems of pure legislation, his judicial science resembles the Greek and Latin of the *Médecin malgré lui.* For instance, he made the Council of State vote that a donation is an act and not a contract, because, he said, a contract implies an engagement between two parties,[2] and none protested by reminding him of unilateral contracts. If he had had the

[1] *Procès-verbaux*, t. ii.: *Séance du* 27 *Brumaire, an* XI.

[2] Locré: *Procès-verbaux*, t. ii.: *Séance du* 7 *Pluviôse, an* XI. 'The First Consul said that as a contract imposes mutual charges on the two contracting parties, this expression could not apply to a donation.'

lofty views that tradition ascribes to him, he would have found ample opportunity of exercising his influence in opposing certain exaggerated tendencies of his epoch, particularly those concerning property and the constitution of the family; but he rather strengthened these prejudices than fought against them. He saw with pleasure the disaggregation of all natural groups, feeling sure that his power would find less resistance when they were broken up. He treated the family like all other kinds of associations which he systematically pulverised for the benefit of the State. With regard to women, he professed the opinion of an oriental, the brutal positivism of the soldier, of which we find too many traces in the theory of the Code, and it is characteristic of the man that he pretended to moralise them by lowering their condition. He consequently increased their dependence; but this was not for the advantage of the family, for he dealt it a blow at the same time by the immense facility he gave to divorce. Just as regardless of the rights of paternal authority as of the stability and duration of conjugal ties, he pressed the premature emancipation of children: in this as in everything he introduced the hand of the State, which produced divisions under pretence of protection. He placed at its mercy property which was already greatly depreciated by an excessive division, by carefully maintaining the right of confiscation, and introducing not only narrow, minute, and vexatious regulations, but a right of expropriation without the previous payment of an indemnity, which had been the principal guarantee of the expropriated landowner; and when afterwards, alarmed at the ruin he had caused, he wished to remedy the evil of this state of things, he could devise nothing better than the re-establishment of *majorats*. In all this he could not allege for excuse the necessity of deferring to the opinions of his contemporaries, for on several of these points he remained below the general standard of the ideas of the epoch, as is proved by contemporary discussions, and the draft of the Convention, so superior in certain parts to the compilation of the Council of State.

It was thus that Bonaparte came by degrees to consider himself the principal creator of a collective work to which he contributed little more than his name, and which probably would have been much better if the suggestions of a man of action and executive authority had not been blended with the views, necessarily more disinterested, larger and more humane, of the eminent jurisconsults whose glory he tried to usurp. The very apparent and exaggerated, if not very efficacious, part that he had taken in the framing of the Code, explains in some measure the incredible irritation that the first criticisms of the Tribunate caused him, when he decided not without reluctance to submit it to legislative sanction. More anxious than ever to gain a strong hold on opinion, to give a great idea of his power at home as well as abroad, he would have wished like a new Moses to promulgate his tables of the law from the top of Sinai amid thunders and lightning; instead of this he must subject his work to an analysis that it would not bear in all points, he must listen to objections good or bad, and endure contradictions that he regarded as directed against himself. It was impossible for him to leave such liberty to an Assembly to whom he would not even allow the free choice of their candidates.

In order to judge correctly of the conduct of the Tribunate and of the Legislative Body, during the discussion of the Civil Code, it is essential to remember that these two Assemblies had no right whatever to propose amendments to a bill presented to them: they were invariably forced to make a choice between its adoption or rejection. The calculated defects of the Constitution of the Year VIII produced in this case a monstrous absurdity. The impossibility of proposing amendments was equivalent to the annihilation of legislative control. It was in this complicated and difficult task, demanding the assistance of the most enlightened minds, involving in the highest degree the interest of future generations, that the hands of the representatives of the nation had been tied, by interdicting them the power of passing a single amendment, or of even changing a single word in the civil laws of their country. However great the

merit of the framers of the Civil Code may be, a number of imperfections and obscurities had necessarily crept into a work of such magnitude, more especially on account of the rapidity with which it had been accomplished. The enormous number of disputed questions which still exist in our jurisprudence are proofs of the equivocal expressions and defects in the compilation of our Code, notwithstanding the improvements that have since been made. Never then had revision been more necessary, never had the need of aid from the Legislative Body been more plainly indicated by the mere force of things; and there was all the less reason to distrust the legislature in this case, that there was no fear of its being perverted by political passions; but everything in the organisation of the powers, as in the attitude of the Government, was combined to render its control illusory.

In spite of this unfortunate state of affairs, the Tribunate considered its legislative task as a patriotic duty and resolved to do the best to fulfil it. Deprived of the right of proposing amendments, they adopted the only plan consistent with conscientiousness and compatible with their dignity, that of only passing the different titles of the Code when they were brought to that degree of perfection which they had a right to exact in the legislation of a great country. It was in this disposition that they examined the first titles of the Civil Code. The preliminary title, composed of several articles, related to *the publication, to the effects, and to the application of the laws.* It was a sort of declaration of principles which was criticised by Andrieux, as being defective in compilation, illogical in certain of its consequences—in short, incomplete and useless. Several of these criticisms were just, especially those which applied to the mode adopted for the promulgation of the laws; they were not refuted: some were inspired by too high an ideal, or an erroneous appreciation; but at any rate Andrieux cannot be reproached with depreciating the work. He extolled 'the indefatigable and fruitful activity of the Government, . . . the precious labour of a beneficent genius, . . . the admirable combinations which astonish

the vulgar, but in which close observers recognise the hand of genius that rules over events.' This is certainly not the language of a *senseless and furious* opponent, such as the tribunes have been represented to be by some of our historians. After a long and close discussion, the conclusions of Andrieux, supported by Chazal and Thiessé, prevailed in this assembly, and the Legislative Body also adopted them, regretting in its turn this preliminary title in spite of the efforts of Portalis and of Boulay de la Meurthe.

The check was of slight importance. Presented anew with a clearer, more precise and more complete wording, the title would have been immediately passed, for its adversaries had only thrown it out in the Legislative Body by a majority of three. Two other titles of the Code were under discussion, one relative to the *enjoyment and the forfeiture of civil rights*, the other to the *acts of the civil state.* Siméon, who was the reporter of the first, endeavoured to justify the Tribunate for the severity of their examination. 'A code,' he said, 'is not like a law decreed for a circumstance. If such a law is necessary, the moment it does not infringe national interests, the Tribunate passes it, though it might be better. But a code ought to be as perfect as it can be made. In its decrees, in its compilation, everything is important, nothing is trifling. We ought to labour for posterity, and offer it a work as pure as gold, and more durable than brass.' The bill contained the re-establishment of the right of *aubaine*, that is to say reciprocity of treatment with regard to strangers, an odious and inhospitable provision, condemned by Montesquieu, partly abolished by the ancient *régime*, and definitely struck out of our laws by the Constituent. In spite of this wretched revival of customs that had fallen into disuse, the commission would have passed the bill, had it not been for the grave defects that disgraced another of its provisions. These defects were no other than the Draconian severities which were attached to *civil death*, viz. confiscation, the dissolution of marriage, and the ruin and dishonour of the children. They were pointed out by Thiessé with a great deal of energy and eloquence, and time has a thousand times proved that his

remonstrances were right. 'Tribunes,' he said, 'let not the word confiscation be henceforth found in any of our laws. It is to the interest of the unfortunate children, to that of families,—shall I say it? it is to the interest of all Frenchmen—that it should not. For a long time provinces and states have placed in the rank of their most precious privileges that of not fearing confiscation. Let us proclaim this privilege as a liberty belonging to every French citizen. . . . The property of a criminal belongs to his children, it belongs to his creditors, it is the redresser of the wrongs he has committed. These are the eternal principles of all justice, of all equity, of all security for general interests, for all private interests. But to seize the property of a criminal, under pretext of crime, is to despoil a corpse after having immolated it.'

The Tribunate honoured itself by opposing this inhuman legislation, which the Government had wished to complete by a proposition to re-establish the brand, which had also been abolished by the Constituent. The *droit d'aubaine*, confiscation, the brand; such were the strange improvements by which this new legislator signalised himself. All generous hearts revolted against the restoration of penalties that had been censured under the ancient *régime;* Boissy d'Anglas, Ganilh, Chazal, Chénier, and a great many other speakers opposed them with persuasive eloquence, but without for one instant overstepping the moderation which they had imposed on themselves. The bill was thrown out in the Tribunate in the sitting of the 1st of January 1802. A few days before the tribunes had given a proof of their good will, by passing by a considerable majority the bill relative to the *Acts of the Civil State*, in spite of two admirable speeches from Benjamin Constant, who, although he approved of the law as a whole, rejected it on account of an evidently defective clause which was struck out later, when it was no longer a tribune who proposed the suppression.[1]

The Tribunate had thus, as far as the Civil Code was concerned, thrown out two bills and passed one. They had moreover passed all the treaties and a number of less im-

[1] Edouard Laboulaye: *Benjamin Constant.*

portant laws. This was not the attitude of a factious assembly. In the negative votes they had conformed to the hard conditions imposed upon them by the Constitution, which 'incessantly gave them,' as Benjamin Constant observed, 'the painful alternative of rejecting for a single article bills of which the other clauses were wisely conceived, or of making a kind of compromise, by virtue of which a bill was passed because it contained, on the whole, more good than faulty clauses.'[1] The Legislative Body had only thrown out one bill, the second not having been presented. The First Consul would not even wait for this second trial. The day after the rejection of the bill by the Tribunate, a message was sent to say that the Government withdrew all the bills, 'seeing that the time was not come when these great discussions could be carried on with all the calmness and unity of intention that they required' (January 2d, 1802).

The First Consul had at last resolved to execute his threat, and he preluded it by putting the Legislative Body, as he often said, '*à la diète des lois.*' But that was not enough; what he wanted was to rid himself altogether of this insolent opposition. He would bring forward his sword again if it were necessary. He gave way to the most violent invectives in the Council of State. Sometimes he contented himself with wishing to destroy the power of the Tribunate: 'Nothing could be done,' he said, 'with so disorganising an institution! The Tribunate must be divided into sections, and their debates must be secret: then they could babble as much as they liked.' At other times he wanted to do away with it altogether: 'There must be no opposition. In England it is not dangerous. The men who compose it are not factious. They have the legitimate influence of talent, and *only seek to be bought by the Crown.* With us it is quite different. It is not place and money that these men solicit: some must be the chiefs of clubs, others want the ancient *régime.*'[2] A simple admission, but one that well expresses the truth. The principal wrong of the opposition in the Tribunate was exactly this, that it was not

[1] Sitting of the 25th December. [2] Thibaudeau.

to be bought. It left Bonaparte the alternative of reckoning with it or violently breaking it up.

He was preparing to take the latter course, when he who has been called the 'sage' Cambacérès because he excelled in corrupting instead of striking blows, in eluding difficulties that he dared not boldly confront, in avoiding scandal, in shuffling with the law, in substituting gentle means for brutal force, in covering tyranny with the mask of legality, suggested to the First Consul the bright idea of making use of the Constitution to destroy the last guarantee that this same Constitution had left in our political laws. Article 38 said that the members of the Tribunate and of the Legislative Body should be renewed every year by fifths, dating from the Year X. With regard to the manner of choosing the outgoing members, it was so natural that no one had thought of fixing it. The time for changing the members was come; there was, said the sage Cambacérès, a very simple means of expelling the opposition without any disagreeable noise or disturbance; it was to let the outgoing fifth be named by the Senate instead of casting lots, as had always been done on similar occasions. This much dreaded opposition did not in fact reckon more than from fifteen to twenty votes in the Tribunate, but it was gaining every day in talent, in knowledge, and in consideration. This cowardly expedient was adopted by the First Consul, but as he was on the point of starting for Lyons, he was obliged to leave the execution of it to his two colleagues. Cambacérès and Lebrun easily obtained the adhesion of the Senate, who immediately proceeded to purge the Tribunate and the Legislative Body. In this way, all the men who had earned the hatred of the new despotism by the loftiness of their minds or the independence of their character or opinions—Daunou, Benjamin Constant, Chénier, Bailleul, Ganilh, Thiessé, Ginguené, Chazal, Isnard—every one, in short, who still dared to make his country hear the importunate name of liberty, were thus expelled from these two assemblies. This opposition, so firm and at the same time so moderate, was stifled without noise in the ingeniously contrived snare of a legist; and the support of public opinion that failed

them in their struggles equally failed them in their obscure defeat. But the remembrance of their courageous resistance will not perish, and the unpopularity that has for so long been the only recompense of their efforts will one day be their best title to glory. With them perished our last guarantees. From this date every vestige of representative government disappeared from our institutions.

The Senate next proceeded to the nomination of the new members of the Tribunate and of the Legislative Body. They were almost all without exception the creatures of the First Consul. Among the men who had consented to take the places of the expelled members of the Tribunate we remark with surprise the glorious name of Carnot. He was the only Republican on the list; and he had agreed to it with his usual weakness, perhaps without understanding the sad use that was to be made of his name. Among the sixty new members of the Legislative Body there were fifteen generals or superior officers, and twenty-five officials of different kinds, which sufficiently indicates the spirit in which the selection had been made.

During the execution of this hypocritical *coup-d'état*, more odious than the usurpations of Brumaire, which had at least taken place unmasked, the First Consul watched events at a distance; he would have liked to have destroyed by the same blow the trembling opposition of the Senate, but they found mercy in his eyes from their powerlessness and servility. 'Sieyès,' he wrote from Lyons to Cambacérès, 'ought to burn a taper in Notre Dame for having come off so well and in so unexpected a manner!' (Jan. 18th). When he returned with the double prestige of the Lyonese oration and the almost royal honours that the Italians had bestowed on him, he saw all the bodies of the State at his feet. He immediately took advantage of this victory to make the two assemblies, whose submission he had now secured, pass bills which he had not hitherto dared to propose to them, and which were the preface or the indispensable accompaniment of the changes that he was meditating for the benefit of his own authority.

These bills related to the Concordat, to the amnesty of

the emigrants, to the taxes of the Year XI, to the reorganisation of public instruction, to the treaty of Amiens, and to the Legion of Honour. After having imposed on the Tribunate a regulation that nullified it, Bonaparte reopened the legislative session, April 5th, 1802.

Since the conclusion of the Concordat, the war that could not fail to break out between two Powers so absolute and so exacting had not ceased to ripen secretly, under the insincere demonstrations that the Pope exchanged with the First Consul. The hope, however, of obtaining great advantages from this transaction was sufficiently strong on each side to make both tolerate causes of discontent. The Court of Rome, which was the weaker by situation, had to endure mortifications and humiliations that made her cruelly expiate her triumph. It was not enough to have to consecrate against her will the twelve Constitutional bishops; she had to hear Portalis openly acknowledge in his famous report all the political motives by which Bonaparte had been actuated, declare that religion was a *means*, *an influence*, and that as such the Government had been obliged to utilise it; she had to look on at the disloyal surprise of the publication of the organic articles, printed first with the Concordat as having had her assent, and afterwards maintained in spite of her protestations. She had not even the consolation of seeing the dissidents retract, for the seeming disavowal that Caprara obtained from Bernier was almost immediately contradicted by those whose work it was believed to be. As for the legislative sanction, it was a sort of offence for Rome, so much did it appear like a passive and mechanical act of obedience. The Concordat and the Articles were presented, debated, and passed in two sittings. The rapidity and precision of a military manœuvre were applied to this legislative operation. Never, however, had a bill been more unpopular. Still the army alone dared to make any opposition. Augereau came in the name of several of his companions to ask Bonaparte's permission to absent themselves from Notre Dame on Easter Sunday, when a *Te Deum* was to be sung to celebrate the reconciliation of the Church with the State.

The only answer he received was an order to obey. Delmas ventured to reply to the First Consul, who asked him what he thought of the ceremony: 'Very fine, General; it only wanted the million of men who sacrificed their lives to destroy what you are re-establishing.' He was exiled.

The amnesty of the emigrants was a fresh occasion for Bonaparte to try the kind of constituent power with which he had invested the Senate, and of which power he proposed ere long to make great use. This body being specially charged with *the interpretation of the Constitution*, he was able under that pretext to make them entirely transform it by means of a *Senatus Consultum*. It was by interpretations of this kind that he had already obtained the deportation of the Jacobins at the time of the infernal machine, and afterwards the purging of the Legislative Body and the Tribunate. The article of the Constitution that he now wanted to have interpreted was thus worded: 'The French nation declares that in no case will they suffer the return of Frenchmen who, having abandoned their country since July 14th, 1789, are not included in the exceptions made to the laws against emigrants. . . . The property of emigrants will irrevocably belong to the Republic.' Such was the text which he pretended to construe into a return of the emigrants, convinced that after such a feat of strength he could easily make the Constitution say what he pleased. From the commencement of the Consulate, Bonaparte had pursued measures which infringed this article; nothing hindered him from decreeing new ones, but what he now wanted was to place the Senate above the Constitution, in order that, thanks to all these precedents, the service he was about to ask might appear quite natural. The Senators, who imagined that they were increasing their own prerogatives, eagerly granted the new *Senatus Consultum*, seeing, they said, 'that the measure was *conformable with the spirit of the Constitution*.' It was accordingly decided that the emigrants, with the exception of the principal chiefs, should be allowed to return, and that those of their estates which had not been sold should be restored to them; but Bonaparte reserved to himself

the right to dispose of the woods and forests, an enormous property which he kept to bestow as premiums to favour conversion and to reward devotion.

The Budget contained the same violation of the Constitution as that of the preceding years; a still worse violation, since this time there was neither a statement of receipts nor a statement of expenditure, and this fresh offence indicated a determination that neither the Legislative Body nor the Tribunate would have tolerated before they were purged; 'but,' said Defermon, 'we ought not to regard the letter of the Constitution, it can only require *a rough* general view of each kind of expenditure, and the nature of the receipts; . . . moreover, how could the Government calculate the receipts and expenditure of the Year XI, when they had hardly the means of knowing those of the Year X?'[1] This convenient theory raised no protest and the financial control shared the same fate as the other constitutional guarantees. The Government henceforth prepared their budget as they chose, ratifying the expenditure themselves, and only laying before the Legislative Body what they thought proper to publish. The Tribunate, however, again ventured to give some timid counsel on the presentation of the bill on public instruction.

This bill, which was the first step towards the establishment of the great university monopoly, reorganised public instruction after the still existing classification of primary and secondary schools, *lycées*, and schools for special studies. It was in a great measure the work of Fourcroy, who drew it up under the direction of the First Consul. It was a true type of centralisation applied to pedagogy; everything in the centre, nothing at the extremities. In the higher ranks official culture, in the lower ranks ignorance. Putting aside as too costly the noble plan of the Constituent and the Convention, that would have made elementary education gratuitous in order that it might be accessible to all, this bill sacrificed primary instruction by leaving it to the insufficient protection of the communes and the precarious pay of the families. It withdrew the support of the State

[1] *Discours de Defermon : Séance du* 3 *Mai* 1802.

from popular instruction, the only branch of education that cannot dispense with its encouragements, and it lavished this same protection on higher education in an overwhelming degree. It was a bureaucratic creation, in which the State, considering instruction as its property and its instrument, systematically crushed all that did not emanate from itself. The sententious Rœderer, who excelled in finding maxims for all proceedings, well described it when he said: 'The institution proposed to you is not merely moral, it is also a *political institution*. . . . Its aim is to unite to the Government the generation that is rising and the one that is passing away, . . . to attach the fathers to the Government by the children, and the children by the fathers, to establish a sort of public *paternity*.' The State consequently exercised its paternity by nominating those eligible for six thousand four hundred scholarships, a sure means indeed of getting a hold on the fathers by the children. It was functionarism beginning from the school. There were, moreover, 'methods sanctioned by the State;' there was also a State literature, sciences recognised, and sciences not recognised by the State. Thus history and philosophy were struck out of the programme of instruction, two subjects that tend most to elevate the mind, but that the State judged superfluous or dangerous. On the other hand, '*professors of military exercise*' were installed in the *lycées*. 'History,' said Rœderer, 'will cease to be a separate branch of education, *history, properly so called, needing to be read only in order to be learned*.'[1] See to what folly the influence of political anxieties led in instruction. Logic was, however, tolerated, being less suspected of sedition. It was by virtue of the same principle, that is to say of pretended utility to the State, that the number of centres of instruction was reduced, for thirty *lycées* were not equivalent to a hundred central schools, and that scientific education was limited; for, said Rœderer again, 'it is of the highest importance to the State, it is of importance to private individuals, it is of importance to science itself, that it should only be confided to a number of citizens proportioned to the state of society.'

[1] *Discours au Corps Législatif: Séance du* 1er *Mai* 1802.

Now it is the same in the order of knowledge as in that of affections: he who fears to give too much never gives enough. Everything in this new organisation was subordinate to the real or supposed interest of the State. The bill contained no clause relative to the education of girls, —of what importance, in fact, were they to the State? It could make neither administrators nor soldiers of girls. Fourcroy did not deny this omission, but he was sure that families would voluntarily supply it. Challan, one of the supporters of the bill, was more explicit: 'Let us say it plainly,' he exclaimed, 'this interesting half of society ought chiefly to be habituated to the cares of the household! The mother of a family amply suffices for this education, and the State has nothing to do with it.'[1] If the bill ruined private schools, which were at that time very flourishing, by only leaving secondary instruction open to them, and subjecting them to the necessity of a preliminary authorisation, it was because the State could not permit them to encroach on its functions, and if primary instruction was allowed to sink to the lowest degree, it was because the Government saw no benefit, at least immediate, to be derived from giving the poorer classes a commencement of intellectual culture; while they thought they could reap great advantages from casting into a uniform mould and stamping with their mark the more highly developed intelligences. Given the inveterate love of the nation for government favours, it was certain that all fathers of families would be seen extending their hands towards the six thousand four hundred scholarships. 'What can be sweeter,' said Rœderer, 'than to see our children in some sort adopted by the State at the time of their entrance into life?' Nothing sweeter in fact, unless it be to see children adopted from the cradle, as our utopians have dreamed, and the State transformed into an immense hospital for foundlings. The State secured by this means immense emulation of cupidity among the parents, and among the sons a nursery of docile and devoted agents. It was the subversion of the natural order of things; for if access to

[1] *Discours au Tribunat: Séance du* 25 *Avril.*

instruction ought to be easy and open to all in the lowest degree, it can only gain as it rises by being the prize of voluntary and persevering labour.

The inevitable result of the whole system was routine in the methods, stagnation in the matter, inertness in the masters; for instruction cannot dispense with stimulus and free activity; it has need to be quickened and incessantly revived by the competition of individual energy, and monopoly has never produced anything but languid and sterile immobility. Chassiron pointed out some of the defects in Fourcroy's plan; he demanded *colleges for schoolmasters* as in Germany, chairs of political and rural economy as at Milan. Duchesnes conclusively proved that with the money set apart for the six thousand four hundred scholarships they could at once make primary instruction free, reducing it, it is true, to what was strictly necessary. He calculated the expense at rather more than four millions. But Siméon hastened to refute this 'romance of gratuitous instruction.' The people, he said, did not desire it; it would be necessary to force the parents to submit to this obligation, as used to be the case with the *corvée*. Fourcroy completed this refutation by exaggerating the cost in order to discredit the institution, according to a well-known method; he estimated the expense as at least twelve millions. All the objections were thus answered. I have, however, recalled them in order to show that if this wretched system was adopted, it was neither through ignorance nor error, but by virtue of a logical and rational choice of a plan in perfect harmony with the whole of the consular policy.

The treaty of Amiens had been signed at the end of March 1802, but its presentation to the Legislative Body had been deferred in view of a grand manifestation, which I shall soon recount. After the long debates to which mutual distrust had given rise, Joseph and Cornwallis had ended by coming to an understanding upon the two most obvious difficulties of the negotiation, viz. upon the question of Malta and that of the prisoners; but the First Consul had not succeeded in spite of his efforts in obtaining from the English Cabinet a recognition of the Ligurian

Republic, any more than of the Cisalpine and of the kingdom of Etruria. Cornwallis had offered to recognise Etruria on condition that Piedmont was declared independent, but this Bonaparte obstinately refused to do. All these refusals were rather threatening for the future, and the First Consul soon showed what advantage he intended to take of them: 'Since his Britannic Majesty,' he said, in a note addressed to Joseph, 'refuses to recognise these three states, . . . if they seek refuge in an incorporation with a great Continental power, his Britannic Majesty would lose all right to complain;' singular reasoning, which amounts to this—that to refuse to recognise the beginning of an incorporation is to accept the complete incorporation! Another of his claims was not less alarming by reason of the exorbitant susceptibility that it announced: Joseph had orders to demand that the extradition of murderers and foreigners should be extended to 'libellers,' that is to say to proscribed writers in England, who attacked the policy of the Consul. It was not enough for him to have destroyed liberty in France, he could not suffer it even in neighbouring nations. 'It is astonishing,' wrote Talleyrand, in a note to Joseph, 'that a Government *that prides itself on being advanced in civilisation* should tolerate such disgusting libels and their miserable authors in its territory.'[1]

Civilisation would then have consisted in violating the English Constitution, which sanctions the liberty of the press, and in delivering up exiles in contempt of the law of nations in order to please the First Consul. His demands were refused, but it was a threatening omen for future peace that he had dared to make them. Entirely engrossed with the joy of seeing tranquillity assured, the public took no notice of these ominous signs; peace with England was in their eyes peace with all Europe, and they rejoiced in it with frenzy. It was this thankfulness without alloy but not without illusions that Bonaparte had resolved to turn to account by keeping in reserve the ratification of the treaty of Amiens to form the crown of the legislative session.

His enemies without were vanquished like those within,

[1] Talleyrand to Joseph, February 2, 1802.

the opposition was destroyed, the press silenced and enchained; the time was come for the First Consul to reap the fruits of this long series of preparatory acts, which dated from the publication of the *Parallèle entre Cromwell, César, et Bonaparte.* That he had at this time thought of obtaining power, no longer temporary but for life, it is impossible to doubt. The public however having shown more surprise than eagerness in accepting the invitation addressed to it, the project had been postponed; but all the subsequent acts of the Consul had tended towards this unique end. It was in view of his favourite plan that he had concluded the Concordat, a sure means of enrolling the restless army of priests; that he had recalled and flattered the emigrants, the natural propagators of monarchical customs and ideas; that he had exhibited to France a king of his own making in the person of the king of Etruria; that he had placed the authority of *Senatus Consulta* above that of the Constitution; that he had challenged at Lyons the servile ovations of the Italians; that at Paris he had driven from the Tribunate and from the Legislative Body all the men who would have made their country hear the accents of free voices. Those who do not see the chain and links of these acts, the striking justification of the opposition that tried to stop their fatal development, are not worthy to hold the pen of the historian. The ground being thus prepared, it was time to draw the natural conclusion from all these events by boldly placing his hand on the supreme power. Nevertheless, when the moment of action came Bonaparte hesitated. It was because in spite of all he had done to corrupt opinion and to lead the public along, he was almost the only one who desired this transformation. Except his brothers and some few of his familiars, decided monarchists, such as Talleyrand, Rœderer, Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, Cambacérès, persons who were moreover interested in sharing his views, no one wished to see increased the already overwhelming power of a man who appeared formidable to the most blind by his impetuosity, the violence of his passions, and by his indomitable pride. His wishes had for a long time been no secret, for everything tended

to this foreseen issue; but as all feared the realisation without daring to put an obstacle in its way, they equally abstained from forwarding it or opposing it; this was all that could be expected from that dispirited and weary generation.

The neutral and passive attitude that he observed even in those about him greatly embarrassed the First Consul, who would have liked a repetition of the comedy so well played out in the Consulte of Lyons, and to appear to yield against his will to the unanimous wish of the nation. Now that all material obstacles were overcome, he was obliged to recognise this moral necessity, which imposed on him the duty even for the sake of the duration of his work of covering his egotistical views with the spurious pretext of general interests and the national will; and he felt at the last moment that even the appearance of this pretext was about to fail him. Hence his trouble and his extraordinary timidity when he was called upon to act and to pronounce. It had been for a long time agreed that the session should terminate by claiming for him an increase of power; but when it had to be decided in what measure and under what title this should be awarded to him, Cambacérès, who was then his most intimate confidant, could not draw from him a single word that would enlighten them on his secret desires. Did he merely wish for an extension of his power? Did he wish to be Consul for life, Protector, President, Emperor, or King? Cambacérès could learn nothing. All that he wrested from him by force of urgent entreaties was the acknowledgment that, whatever might be the reward of which the great bodies of the State deemed him worthy, he should accept it with gratitude. With some of the Councillors of State who tried to find out his real thoughts he carried his dissimulation still farther; he declared that he was satisfied with his honours, and did not see the necessity of increasing them. After having prepared everything for the execution of his designs, he wanted it to appear that they did violence to his feelings, and were forcibly imposing upon him what he was burning to take. He felt sure that he had been understood by the Senate, and he did not

admit that, having been understood, he should not be obeyed. In short, it seemed to him impossible that they should offer him a part, when it only depended on himself to take the whole.

The determination of the end being thus left to the spontaneous enthusiasm of the senators, they adopted for means a motion of the Tribunate. It was a refined and ingenious cruelty to make the body they had just mutilated take the lead on this occasion; they dealt the last blow by turning to account their ancient reputation for incorruptibility, and by dishonouring their memory. The day that the treaty of Amiens was communicated to this assembly, the 6th of May 1802, the president, Chabot de l'Allier, as soon as the reading was over, proposed that the Tribunate should express a wish 'that a striking mark of national gratitude should be given to Bonaparte, First Consul.' The most curious feature of the intrigue was that Chabot suspected nothing: he had been made to believe that it was simply an honorary testimony.[1] The motion was no sooner put than it was passed, and Siméon came at the head of a deputation to convey to Bonaparte the wishes of the Tribunate. After enumerating in hyperbolical language the great actions of the hero, 'I pass on,' said Siméon, 'I fear to appear to praise when I have only to be just. We expect the first body of the nation to be the interpreter of this general sentiment, of which the Tribunate is only permitted to vote the expression.' The First Consul remained faithful to his enigmatical attitude. He desired no other glory than that of having accomplished his task. He wished for no higher recompense than the affection of his fellow-citizens. Life was only dear to him by the services he could render to the country, and death would have no bitterness for him if his last glance could see the welfare of the Republic as assured as his own glory.

The Senate was not the less bound to impose on the First Consul the sacrifice of his modest and disinterested tastes. The senators, notwithstanding their proverbial complaisance, would for the most part have wished to turn a

[1] *Journal de Stanislas Girardin.*

deaf ear; for if they were pusillanimous they were also prudent, and they did not see without fear the mad course of this unbounded ambition. But as they could not dream of neglecting so direct a summons as the motion of the Tribunate, they feigned to take the disinterestedness of the First Consul seriously. In spite of the protestation of Cambacérès, they pretended to believe that to offer him a magistracy for life would exceed his desires, perhaps even hurt his feelings as a republican; and they proposed merely an extension of his power for ten years. This proposition was accepted, thanks more particularly to Tronchet, then president of the Senate, a sensible and clear-sighted man, by no means hostile, but who was justly alarmed at the temerity of the new Cæsar. The Senate accordingly drew up a Senatus Consultum, which re-elected for ten years the citizen Napoleon Bonaparte, dating from the expiration of the ten years for which he had already been named. There was one voice raised against it, that of Lanjuinais, one of the last survivors of the Gironde and a worthy representative of that noble party.

On hearing the result of this vote Bonaparte flew into a violent passion. The honours that he had declared he was ready to accept with gratitude, whatever they might be, were regarded by him as a sort of outrage. The Senate had no right to award them, it was a usurpation of the rights of the people. Such was the meaning of the reply that he wrote in the first moment of indignation; and there is no knowing to what extremities his anger might not have driven him, at having been thus caught in his own snare by the men on whom he counted the most, if the wise Cambacérès had not again interposed with his ingenious expedients. Since the Senate showed such ill-will and so misunderstood their mission, why not appeal to the nation itself which was much less subtle and less grudging of its favours? The sovereign people were still good for something. They had been absolutely mute and annulled ever since the creation of the lists of notability; but speech could be restored to them for this occasion, and silence imposed on them afterwards.

Owing to this stratagem the First Consul was able both to hide his discontent and to avenge himself of the disappointment which the Senate had inflicted upon him. 'Senators,' he said, in reply to the message, 'the suffrage of the people invested me with the supreme magistrature; *I should not feel assured of its confidence, if the act which retains it for me was not again sanctioned by its suffrage.* During the years that have elapsed fortune has smiled upon the Republic, but fortune is inconstant, and how many men upon whom she has heaped her favours have lived too long. . . . You think that I owe a *fresh sacrifice* to the people. I will make it, if the will of the people commands what your suffrage authorises.'

What he omitted to say, however, in this declaration in antique style was that this new sacrifice on which he was about to consult the people before he submitted to it would be much greater than that which the Senate had wished to impose upon him; for instead of an extension of ten years, he intended to ask for the Consulate for life. Thirst for sacrifice could hardly be carried further than this. This alteration of the proposition of the Senate was made through the Council of State, the majority of whom were as ill-disposed as the senators; but they were obliged to obey the word of command. Dubois, the Prefect of Police, came to them and deposed that the public were very discontented because the Consulate for life had not been awarded to Bonaparte, whereupon it was decided almost without discussion that the people should be consulted to know whether the First Consul should be named for life. Rœderer in an excess of zeal added that Bonaparte should have the right to *appoint his successor.* But the First Consul, who for some time had been declaiming against hereditary right, a sure sign that he was thinking of it for himself and that he wished to give the idea to others, struck out of the decree of the Council the clause officiously inserted by Rœderer, as encroaching upon the rights of the people. The *Moniteur* of the 11th of May 1802 accordingly announced that registers would be opened in the Mairies, in the offices of the Tribunals, and with the notaries, to

receive votes upon this question—'Shall Napoleon Bonaparte be chosen Consul for life?'

All the bodies of the State came to compliment him on his deference to the national will, and an immense number of congratulatory addresses were got up among all kinds of officials, in order to give an impulse to the people. We may quote as a specimen of these manifestations the address of Beugnot, Prefect of the Lower Seine: 'Every citizen,' he said, 'will feel that he is doing his best for the country by expressing the wish that your power may last as long as your life. If it could equal that of your glory, the destinies of France would be fixed. But nature shortens the days of those who have the best right to immortality.'

It was during this sort of interregnum of three weeks that Bonaparte made the Legislative Body pass two bills, or rather two institutions, that were in his eyes the stepping-stones to the new *régime*. One was the re-establishment of slavery in our colonies, the other the establishment of the Legion of Honour. The first of these measures was disguised under the discreet title of *A Project relative to the Colonies restored by the Treaty of Amiens, and to other French Colonies.* It re-established not only slavery, but the slave trade as it had existed before 1789.

Nothing was yet decided with regard to Saint Domingo; the Government carefully avoided naming this colony, and it appeared not to be included in the measure, in conformity with the solemn promise of Bonaparte—a promise that he had already violated in Guadaloupe. But a special article supplied this omission by decreeing 'that notwithstanding anterior laws, the *régime* of the colonies would be subjected for ten years to regulations made by the Government,' an obscure clause that the reporter Dupuy, a Councillor of State, interpreted very clearly when he said 'that in the colonies where revolutionary laws had been put into execution (that is to say in Saint Domingo), they would hasten to substitute these *seductive theories* for a *reparative* system, of which the combinations varying with circumstances would be confided to the wisdom of the Government.' With regard to this, the past replied for

the future; but the Government was unable to carry out their benevolent intentions, and the blacks, delivered of their saviours by the yellow fever, were happy to continue to live under the yoke of what the supporters of the bill called 'a cruel philanthropy.'

The Legion of Honour was a pure creation of the First Consul; it has survived him, for it was founded both upon the interest of the Government and the vanity of individuals; and it has remained so dear to self-love that it requires some independence of spirit to speak of it freely. It was perhaps of all his conceptions the one that was dearest to him. It became in fact the man who had placed all interests, all liberty, all fortunes, and all lives, in the hands of the Government, to place also, if not the honour of citizens, as the name of the institution seemed to imply, at least their titles to consideration and dignity. Nothing is more natural or more legitimate than that the State should endeavour to remunerate services rendered to it, for in so doing it only pays its debts; but that it should constitute itself the sovereign judge of talents and virtues in every sphere of human activity, that it should pretend to classify merit and apportion to each his due share of consideration, is a thought that could only exist in the mind of a despot, and could only please men without dignity. A really proud nation would never have acknowledged a competence that was more offensive even than privileges of birth, for hazard at least lays no claim to pass judgment. But vanity being infinitely more common than pride, the calculation that inspired Bonaparte was true and profound. An institution that speculates upon such weakness is always sure of success, but the kind of emulation that it develops is not calculated to raise the moral standard of a nation. If a good system of public rewards is an extremely rare and delicate thing, what can be thought of one that from the onset involves a thirst for distinctions, a spirit of intrigue and servility among the applicants, and incompetence in the judge? So long as the State recompenses in the name of a clearly defined public interest, it is in its province and performs a duty, but the moment it transforms itself into a sovereign pontiff

of genius, of virtue, and of honour, it assumes a task beyond its strength, for the characteristic of honour is to recognise no other judge than itself, and genius like virtue is beyond official estimation. This, however, is only the moral side of the question: the measure had in a political point of view a far graver inconvenience than that of replacing lofty motives by a mean and miserable vanity; it was the danger of adding another powerful instrument of domination to the hold the Government already had on the nation. Its power had no counterbalance, it was irresistible; what would it become with such a means of influence acting no longer by constraint, but by universal and incessant temptation?

This radical and indelible vice of an institution that was more fit for China than the France of 1789, was the one that struck opinion least at the time. The bill was very unfavourably regarded by public opinion; the proof is in the fact that it was combated with great vivacity in the Council of State, where opposition was by no means frequent, and that it only passed by a small majority even in the purged Tribunate and Legislative Body; but its adversaries, Mathieu Dumas, Thibaudeau, Admiral Truguet, on the one hand, Savoye Rollin and the marquis of Chauvelin, on the other, rejected it as favourable to aristocratic prejudices. They did not perceive, or perhaps they did not dare to perceive, that it was still more favourable to despotism; for the distinctions of which the Government became the distributor were of a kind to give it a powerful hold on the classes that were most independent by their position. No one, moreover, better characterised the institution than its author himself, when after having exhausted sophisms to justify it he openly acknowledged its spirit and aim in a moment of impatience. We know the reply that he gave to Berlier and Truguet in the discussion in the Council of State: 'You call it a toy,' he exclaimed, 'well! it is with toys that men are led! *I should not say that to a tribune*, but in a council of wise men and statesmen everything ought to be said. I do not believe that the French care for liberty and equality; ten years

of revolution have not changed them; they are what the Gauls were—they need rewards. See how the people bow before the stars of foreigners!' This was clearly saying that he did not wish to run counter to the taste of the French, and that the institution was neither favourable to liberty nor equality, although its statutes imposed upon the knights of the Legion of Honour the oath to defend those two principles. He could not better refute his own declarations upon the necessity of 'creating intermediary institutions between the Government and the nation, and throwing some blocks of granite in the midst of all the grains of sand that made up the French people.' He was, in fact, doing just the contrary, since he was strengthening the Government by placing in its hands a lever of incalculable power. The truth is that he saw, to use his own expression, an additional means in the Legion of Honour of *leading men*,—that of turning to account their passions and weaknesses in order to deceive, to lower, and to enslave them.

Meanwhile the registers had been sent to the Senate, who summed up the votes. The ayes amounted to more than three million five hundred thousand; the noes were only some few thousands. But the ardour of the electors, the intimidation exercised upon them, the absence of all control over the votes, gave a great importance to this small number.

Lafayette wrote in the register that 'he could not vote for such a magistracy so long as political liberty was not guaranteed.' He explained his motives more fully in a letter addressed to the First Consul. After having expressed his gratitude for the services he had received from him, he said: 'It is impossible that you, General, the first in that order of men who to find their equals and to claim their true place embrace all centuries, should wish that such a revolution, so much blood, so much sorrow, so many victories, so many prodigies, should have no other result than an arbitrary *régime!*' This counsel, which was not listened to, put an end to their intercourse, and Lafayette retired into private life, not to leave it again till the fall of the Empire.

There are untoward epochs in which a whole nation hurries along towards servitude. The opinion of a single man who ventures to resist the current has more weight then than that of an entire people. Lafayette represented France, the true France of 1789, still vigorous in spite of a momentary infatuation. He could say with the poet, 'Rome is all where I am!'

But victory was not everything: it was necessary to take advantage of a conquest; and it was in this art that Bonaparte especially excelled. We have seen how he drew from the treaty of Amiens, in spite of the repugnance of the senators, an extension of power for ten years, and how afterwards by a sort of conjuror's trick he turned this extension of ten years into the Consulate for life. He was now about to perform a similar operation with the vote for the Consulate for life, for it had also to yield its fruit. Those who after this fresh success believed him satisfied with power, at least for a time, little knew the nature of that insatiable ambition—an ambition possessed with what Scripture calls 'the voracity of the pit.' In endeavouring to quench the thirst that devoured him they had only irritated it.

The day that the Senate brought the return of the votes, the 3d of August 1802, France learned by the First Consul's speech, that in voting for the magistracy for life they had also voted for new institutions, and that he was about to interpret the plebiscitum as freely as the Senatus Consultum. 'Senators,' he said, 'the life of a citizen belongs to his country. The French people wish mine to be entirely consecrated to it. I obey their will. In giving me a fresh token, a permanent token of confidence, *they impose on me the duty of firmly establishing the system of their laws upon provident institutions.*'

The plan of these provident institutions had already been drawn up and arranged in all points. Their aim was of course 'to secure liberty and equality from the caprices of chance and the uncertainty of the future.' There was not an act of oppression nor a tyrannical measure that was not shielded by this magical formula; it might be said to

have the virtue of purifying the most iniquitous arts, and instead of being astonished at the insulting derision of which it was perpetually the object, the public continued to regard it as a homage rendered to the principles of the Revolution; an illusion that would be inexplicable if we did not remember that the democracy of this time, indifferent to liberty, was only attached to its interests, of which Bonaparte still represented the triumph and consolidation. The modifications made in the Constitution of the Year VIII completely obliterated the faint appearance of control and guarantee that had been left in it. The lists of notability were replaced by cantonal assemblies, who nominated the candidates both for Justices of the Peace and for the municipal councils, and by electoral colleges of the arrondissement and the department. The colleges of the arrondissement, composed at the most of *two hundred members*, nominated the candidates for the Tribunate; the departmental colleges, composed at the most of *three hundred members*, presented candidates for the General Councils, the Legislative Body, and the Senate. All these electors, whose office was confined to presenting candidates—for the Government alone could choose—were named for life by the cantonal assemblies. The Tribunate, reduced to fifty members, was divided into sections, and debated with closed doors by the side of the Council of State, of which it was nothing more than a branch. The Council of State itself saw with marked displeasure its own functions greatly diminished by the creation of a Privy Council charged with giving advice on treaties and preparing Senatus Consulta. The Council of State, with all its docility, still too much resembled a free assembly; Bonaparte sometimes met with the semblance of contradiction in it. The Senate alone gained an enormous increase of authority. They could suspend the constitution, set aside the judgment of the tribunals, interpret the constitution by Senatus Consulta, dissolve the Legislative Body and the Tribunate; but their functions, so magnificent in appearance, were reduced to nothing by the fact that they could only do all this upon *the initiative*

of the Government;[1] a provision too often passed over in silence, and one that shows to whose advantage the Senate had received this formidable extension of power. The First Consul, so lavish towards this assembly, had treated himself much more modestly; he had only accepted the right of granting pardons and of nominating his successor, a moderation really worthy of admiration, if it were not explained by the article I have just quoted. He had further reserved to himself, in spite of the right of the electoral colleges, the power to nominate forty new senators without a previous presentation of candidates. Thanks to this power and the creation of the Sénatoreries, the Senate was henceforth shielded from the spirit of sedition.

A few old constituents of 1791, of whom Camille Jourdan was the mouthpiece, had urged the change in the institutions; they had even gone so far as to demand the re-establishment of the monarchy in favour of Bonaparte, in the hope of obtaining from him in exchange the re-establishment of constitutional forms and guarantees; Camille Jourdan eloquently expressed these generous illusions in a pamphlet that made a great stir.[2] After having rendered the most flattering homage to the talents of Bonaparte, he proved that the First Consul was everything in our institution; he reminded his readers that order was nothing without liberty. He then goes on to ask what the First Consul was going to do with his power: 'He has reaped,' he said, 'all the laurels of war; he is seated on the summit of power; he has exhausted the applause that fame accords to the victorious: what can remain in this ardent soul, eager for fresh emotions, tormented with the need of great things, if it be not the wish to take advantage of a position unique in the annals of the world, to ameliorate the condition of the human race, to set the limit that justice claims to this immense power with which he is invested, and fearlessly to conduct with the supple reins of popular laws a great nation in the brilliant paths traced out by the light of centuries? This is what Europe

[1] *Article* 56 *du Senatus-Consulte organique de la Constitution.*
[2] *Vrai sens du vote national sur le Consulat à vie*, anonymous.

expects of him; this will show what he really is.' Bonaparte's reply to these noble exhortations was soon given: he had Camille Jourdan's pamphlet seized as factious.

'I let them go on,' he said to the Council of State, 'I received all their plans, and I have pursued my own. . . . Lafayette and Latour Maubourg wrote to me that they would vote Yes, on condition that liberty of the press was re-established. What can be expected of men who are always stickling for their metaphysics of 1789? Liberty of the press! If I were to re-establish it, I should immediately have thirty royalist journals and as many Jacobin, and I should have to govern again with a minority.'

CHAPTER VII

RUPTURE OF THE TREATY OF AMIENS

The treaty of Amiens, signed after long discussions on the 25th of March 1802, had left grave questions unsettled between France and England. Those questions, touched upon at different intervals in the course of the negotiations either by Joseph or by Lord Cornwallis, had been set aside from the evident impossibility of coming to an understanding, and the definite arrangement had been passed over in silence. The most serious of these difficulties was the considerable increase of power that France had gained even while the conditions of peace were being discussed in London and at Amiens. It was during this time of indecision, when we were neither at peace nor at war, and when England could not invoke treaties that were not signed, that Bonaparte hastened to reduce to servitude more or less disguised, Holland by means of the new Batavian Constitution, the Cisalpine by the Consulte of Lyons, Genoa by a change of institutions, and Piedmont by a union that was supposed to be only temporary. He had reckoned that the Addington Cabinet in their immoderate desire to conclude peace would allow him to do all this without opposition; and he was not mistaken. The English Government had shut their eyes upon acts they could not prevent, saying that after all these changes were only provisional, at least as far as Holland and Piedmont were concerned, for Holland had been admitted at Amiens as an independent Power, and nothing had been definitely decreed with regard to Piedmont. The First Consul had gone still farther, and had tried to obtain from

the English ministry a formal ratification of all these acts of violence and usurpation. In this he had failed. The English Cabinet obstinately refused to recognise the phantoms of government that Bonaparte had introduced into these different countries. Having no longer in their present position any means of opposing these changes, they had submitted to them as events beyond their control, but they had never sanctioned them. It was evident that if they consented to tolerate in spite of their repugnance a state of affairs that was alarming for their independence and prejudicial to their interests, they would not bear any aggravation of it. The attitude of England clearly signified this: We have suffered for love of peace all that you have hitherto done; but if you go a step farther we shall go to war. Bonaparte had drawn a very different conclusion from this refusal. 'Since England,' he said, in a note read by Joseph to Lord Cornwallis, February 21st, 'refuses to recognise these new states, she loses all right to interfere in their affairs, or to complain if they are ultimately incorporated with France.' And the treaty of Amiens was scarcely signed before he began to act in accordance with this extraordinary declaration of principles.

Another subject of dispute, one that was quite new in the diplomatic history of nations, was the almost unlimited liberty of the press in England. Offences committed through the press were treated in that country like offences committed in any other way; they were submitted to common law, and the author had only to answer for them before the tribunals. It was a government sprung from the French Revolution that here dared to invoke a grievance which the ancient *régime* had never dreamed of. No fact proves more cruelly the shame and abasement of the nation of 1789. Bonaparte had demanded during the negotiations that *libellers*, that is to say, writers who ventured to attack his character or to blame his policy, should be classed with assassins, and as such should be subject to the laws of extradition. This demand had been refused, very gently it is true, by the Addington Cabinet, who even if they had used all their efforts, would have found great difficulty in

making Parliament pass such a measure; but the First Consul, encouraged by a moderation in which he thought he saw a proof of weakness, had by no means given up the hope of imposing his wishes upon England. As a government founded upon public opinion was perfectly incomprehensible to him, he regarded the consideration of the English Government for the press as cowardice and their scruples as hypocrisy. He had therefore no doubt of overcoming Addington's opposition by menace or by intimidation.

To these wide or rather these irreconcilable differences with regard to the reciprocal obligations of the two countries, their rights, and their position in Europe, was added an opposition of industrial and commercial interests, which was not in itself dangerous to the peace, but which was about to become so, owing to the requirements and claims of the First Consul. At the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens he had formally refused a treaty of commerce between France and England. He had reserved the question as a sure means of ulterior influence upon the determinations of the English Cabinet. If in consequence of this policy he had contented himself with interdicting to English merchandise all the ports and markets of France, under the pretext, more or less spurious, of protecting our industry, he would have done nothing more than use a right very prejudicial to the two nations, but at any rate a strict right, and one that could be defended; but his intention was to shut them out of all countries that depended on us,—from Holland, from the Italian Republic, from Genoa, from Piedmont, from Switzerland, and even from Spain, which he increasingly treated as a conquered province. He had plainly put forward these various claims in the conference of Amiens.[1] A prohibition imposed in such proportions amounted to a blockade, and tended to make England perish from inanition in the very midst of her riches.

A last difficulty naturally arose from the execution of the clause of the treaty of Amiens which related to the

[1] *Protocole du 21 Fevrier.*

evacuation of Malta. This evacuation was subordinate to the acceptance by the Great Powers of the guarantee which the treaty conferred on them, and the English Cabinet had displayed the most loyal eagerness in demanding this acquiescence, while our Government showed an inexplicable negligence and indifference; but it was soon known that Russia was not disposed to accord the guarantee, and that she proposed conditions that were far from acceptable.[1] Hence an inevitable delay in the execution of the clause relative to the island of Malta, and consequently fresh causes for disagreement and discord.

Such were the germs of the misunderstanding that existed between France and England at the conclusion of the peace of Amiens. However formidable they may have become in a very short time, at the commencement it would have been easy to prevent their growth. The Addington Ministry were anxious for peace, it was the only reason for their existence; they staked their honour in rendering it durable, they boasted of it to their adversaries as their own work, and as their title to the gratitude of the country. This fact is so evident from all the discussions of the time, and especially from the parliamentary debates, that the most obtuse or ignorant cannot fail to recognise it. France was not less interested in peace than England; the people may even be said to have insisted on it, in spite of the taste they had lately acquired for conquest and adventures. They needed it for their commerce, for their manufactures just beginning to revive, for the security of their recent colonial enterprises, and for the reparation of all the evils that ten years of war had caused. They were surfeited with military glory, and satisfied with the advantages they had obtained, and they thirsted for the benefits so long deferred of internal prosperity. Even Bonaparte himself, however incompatible the maintenance of peace may have been with his secret plans, appeared at first sincerely to desire it. He studied the means of reviving our industry, he gave a fresh impulse to works at home, he prepared an

[1] Despatches from Lord St. Helens to Lord Hawkesbury, April and May 1802.

expedition destined to take possession of Louisiana, which Spain had ceded to us in exchange for the kingdom of Etruria; he even consented on the instance of the English Cabinet to send an agent to England, charged to negotiate a treaty of commerce; but the compromise proposed by this agent was so foolishly conceived that his mission could not be considered as serious. The First Consul hoped to the end to make England buy this treaty of commerce at the price of an adhesion to his policy.

These illusions were kept up till the beginning of June 1802, rather more than two months after the signature of the treaty of Amiens, when Merry, the *chargé-d'affaires* of England in Paris, informed his Government of the fresh complaints that the First Consul made about the attacks directed against him by the English press, and about the plots of the emigrants. The British press did in reality criticise his policy with a vivacity that was the more striking because it was the only one that dared to break the silence of Europe. Its violence was moreover far surpassed by several papers edited in London by some French refugees, among which we may remark the *Ambigu* of Peltier, the former editor of the *Actes des Apôtres*. But these criticisms, sometimes just, sometimes exaggerated, were such as have at all times been inseparable from liberty of writing. Merry was instructed to reply with regard to the press, that in England it enjoyed an entire liberty guaranteed by the constitution, and as far as the emigrants were concerned, that their *acts* should be repressed, but that to go farther than this and to take anticipatory measures against them, would be incompatible with honour and with the laws of hospitality.[1] The French Government did not consider themselves beaten; they returned to the charge, insisting on their demands, and this time they claimed the expulsion or the punishment of Peltier, of Cobbett and his accomplices, *in the name of the law of nations.*[2]

This intermeddling in the internal affairs of a free people

[1] Despatch of Lord Hawkesbury, June 10, 1802. *Papers laid before both Houses.* Hansard's *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxvi.

[2] Otto to Hawkesbury, July 25.

was singularly aggressive: from Bonaparte it was still more significant, when it is remembered that Venice, Holland, Switzerland, and Spain had already paid for having permitted such an interference, and any other ministry would have repulsed it in a manner that would have entirely prevented any repetition. But the weak Addington was so afraid of compromising peace, that Lord Hawkesbury replied with an exaggerated moderation, calculated to give rise to hopes that he could not satisfy. Otto had sent him as a corroborating proof a number of the *Ambigu*, full of abuse of Bonaparte; he admitted that it was punishable, but he justly remarked that the English Government was itself incessantly exposed to similar attacks, and notwithstanding that their authors were placed under their immediate authority, they paid no attention to them. He would, however, consult the Attorney-General upon what could be done in the affair. As for the emigrants, he observed that when James II. sought refuge in France, the English Cabinet never took any steps to obtain his expulsion.[1] Nevertheless he promised Otto that the refugees in the island of Guernsey should be sent to England, and he hinted at the possibility that Georges and the principal Chouan chiefs should be embarked for Canada, without however making any formal engagement on this point.

But he little knew his adversary if he imagined that he could satisfy him with promises and half measures. Otto at the instigation of the First Consul replied, August 17, by a much more violent note than any he had previously addressed to the English Cabinet. The tone of this note was rather that of an ultimatum than a request:[2] 'The laws and the particular constitution of England permitted the censure of the acts of its internal administration; this was all very well, *but above this constitution were the general principles of the law of nations, to which the laws of states*

[1] Lord Hawkesbury to Otto, July 28, 1802.

[2] It is the first of that small number of documents that Bonaparte thought fit, after having made some alterations, to communicate to the Legislative Body, on the subject of the rupture with England. (Sitting of May 20, 1803.)

ought to give way. If perfect liberty of the press was a right in England, it was a public right of civilised nations and a strict obligation for governments to hinder, repress, and punish all attacks that might be made by this means upon the rights, the interests, and the honour of foreign governments. *This maxim of the law of nations had never been violated without leading the way to the most violent dissensions.*' Otto then enumerated his grievances against libellers and refugees of every kind, without however charging the latter with any other facts than 'their meetings, their conspiracies, and their odious plots;' vague accusations, which have never been admitted by a government that has any respect for its dignity. He recalled an article in the treaty of Amiens, which stipulated that neither of the two nations should give *any protection* to those who were injuring the other; he appealed to the Alien Act that had fallen into disuse; he then concluded by summing up the demands of the First Consul in the six following points: 1st, The employment of effectual means for suppressing seditious publications, newspapers, and other writings published in England; 2d, the expulsion of the refugees from Jersey; 3d, the expulsion of the former Bishops of Arras, of Saint Pol-de-Léon, and of all those who followed their example; 4th, the deportation to Canada of Georges and his adherents; 5th, the banishment of all the princes of the House of Bourbon; 6th, the expulsion of all the French emigrants who dared to wear the orders and decorations of the ancient Government of France.

On reading the list of these strange requirements, addressed to a proud nation which had scarcely laid down the sword after ten years of war, one asks what Bonaparte would have added to them if, instead of being minister of free England, Addington had only been a simple delegate of the high consular police. This alarming persistence of the French Government greatly embarrassed him, and it is not unlikely that personally he would have been very glad to satisfy their demands; but his power did not permit of this. The Addington Ministry, constantly weakened by the combined attacks of the extreme Tories and the most influential

of the Whigs, only kept office by the partial protection of the king, and by the disdainful abstention of Pitt. They would have fallen the moment they showed any sign of making the concessions that were demanded of them. Addington therefore persevered in trying to convince the First Consul that the attacks of which Bonaparte complained were inseparable from the liberty of the press, and the Government had no power to stop them. But men who committed offences by means of the press were like all other offenders answerable before the tribunals, and he could bring an action against them as any private individual did. Moreover the violence of the English papers was at least equalled by that of the French papers, and of the *Moniteur*. Every one knew that the *Moniteur* was an official paper, 'Yet His Majesty had always considered it beneath his dignity to make any complaint on this subject.'[1] The only paper in England that had an official character was the *London Gazette*, and it could not be charged with a similar offence. With regard to the other claims of the French Government, he promised to satisfy them as far as the refugees in Jersey were concerned, who were in fact removed, but he positively refused to act in the same way towards the princes of the House of Bourbon, or to the emigrants who wore their decorations.

Lord Hawkesbury's assertion relative to the *Moniteur* was in every point correct. Almost every morning this paper contained articles against England, which were not less violent and acrimonious than those of Peltier; but what the British Minister did not know was, that these articles were almost always suggested by the First Consul, and were sometimes of his own writing. They were full of suspicions, of outrageous accusations against the Government, and of insult to the nation. 'What result,' he wrote one day, 'can the English Government expect to obtain by fomenting the troubles of the Church, by welcoming and throwing back upon our territory the brigands of the Côtes-du-Nord and of Morbihan, covered with the blood of the richest and most influential landowners of our unfortunate

[1] Despatch of Lord Hawkesbury to Merry, August 28.

departments? *Does not this show that the French Government is now more firmly established than the English Government?* Do they think it would be difficult for the French Government to retaliate? What would be the effect of this exchange of abuse, *of this protection and encouragement given to assassins?*'[1] Another day he said, speaking of the elections: 'Jean Jacques wrote that the English are only free once in seven years, when they choose their representatives for Parliament. He had only seen this liberty, like many other things, through the prism of his imagination. If he could have witnessed this great act of liberty, he would have seen nothing but corruption, licence and drunkenness.'[2]

In order to give an appearance of probability to these assertions, the *Moniteur* published letters from London, supposed to be written by English, full of the grossest slanders on the British nation: 'Nothing equals the excesses of our elections. More than forty persons have been killed on this occasion in different parts of the kingdom. Our elections resemble saturnalia—bloody saturnalia. . . . He who has most money is sure of the most votes,' etc.[3] The same paper contained a series of articles on the English Government, to show that it was only based upon corruption.[4] It examined the budget to prove that they were on the verge of ruin and bankruptcy: 'What a difference,' exclaimed the writer, in conclusion, 'between a people *who make conquests from a love of glory, and a nation of shopkeepers turned filibusters.*'

Bonaparte had organised a special press charged with insulting England and abusing its Government. He employed in this work the miserable Barrère, who had descended to the office of police spy and paid slanderer, and Fiévée, who sent him articles from England for the *Mercure*, independently of the empty, vague, and pointless, though sometimes witty letters, that have since been printed. He also engaged misguided and eccentric men, like Montlosier, others capable of anything, such as Méhée

[1] *Moniteur* of August 8.
[2] *Moniteur* of July 23.
[3] *Moniteur* of July 30.
[4] *Moniteur* of the 1st of September (extract from the *Mercure*).

or Beauvoisin, whom he sent to England to write libels and at the same time to send secret reports upon the emigrants; and even renegades like that Goldsmith who, having fled to France after a judicial condemnation, was editing the *Argus* in English, and for the sake of money was showering outrage and infamy upon his native country. But this retaliation did not satisfy the First Consul; it did not lessen his irritation, for the articles were not read; and the public, who eagerly caught at anything that attacked his power, gave no attention to these bought retorts. There was one corner in Europe, and only one, where his acts and his character could be freely criticised, where people could tell him the truth—a thing a thousand times more insufferable than abuse to him, the man before whom *the Universe was silent*, according to the expression of Fontanes' pamphlet; he saw that this was the only spot in the world where men still dared to defy him, and he could not take his eyes from it. He would have been glad to annihilate it. If we want to form an idea of his exasperation, we have only to remember the fit of anger into which the attacks of the Paris papers threw him, at the time of Dumolard's interrogation on the subject of the occupation of Venice in 1797. And since then how many battles had he gained, how many giant strides had he taken, not only towards supreme power, but towards domination over all Europe! He considered that he was just on the eve of becoming master of the Continent; he thought he had only to extend his hand in order to seize the sceptre of the old Western Empire; and all his plans, that had been so well laid to bring about this result, were to be discussed, analysed, and brought to light, by an active and vigilant press that penetrated everywhere. His mean conduct towards weak nations, his hypocritical usurpations covered by the lies of the *Moniteur*, his violence towards Holland, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, his cunningly laid snares, all the surprises, in short, that he had already effected, and those that he was meditating for the future, were to be incessantly denounced, unmasked, and commented upon, by a thousand inexorable witnesses whose eyes, penetrating deeper than those of the Governments

that had fallen, were constantly fixed upon him, and whose voices would be the better heard now that they were no longer drowned by the noise of arms. It must be acknowledged that in execrating the English press he yielded not only to the outbursts of his ungovernable pride, but to a logical necessity; he was only consistent with his principles. The policy that Bonaparte had followed since his elevation to the Consulate was incompatible with the existence of a free press, not only in France but in Europe. Suppose writers had exposed day by day, even without passing any judgment on them, the acts of his intervention in these different countries, nothing of what he had done would have been possible. In order to keep the conquests he had thus acquired, or to carry out those he was preparing, one thing was indispensable to him—silence.

Silence was necessary for him, and as soon as he was convinced that he could not impose it on England by intimidation, he returned to his first idea of going to war. He had not probably decided on the precise time; he was engaged in several enterprises that forbade him at any price to break peace suddenly; but from the time of the failure of Otto's propositions, the design of recommencing hostilities is patent, and while he challenged his adversary, he was taking his precautions in expectation of the rupture. As early as the 26th of July the *Moniteur* announced that the First Consul had never had any intention of concluding a treaty of commerce with England; this was only a revenge for Otto's previous deceptions. The last refusals of Lord Hawkesbury were no sooner made (the end of August 1802), than he issued the decree which definitely united Piedmont and the island of Elba to France (the beginning of September), and he so thinly disguised the consequences of this measure, that though he pretended 'that the Powers took no interest in it,' he wrote to M. de Saint Marsan 'that he would go to war if it were necessary to secure their possession.' He immediately hastened firmly to establish his domination by means of military colonies (September 17), an idea borrowed from the Romans, and one that rendered the conquest more odious, by assigning a portion of the

territory to the foreigners who had been planted by force in the midst of the vanquished populations. But it was not enough to confiscate the country and to annex the people, it was necessary that Europe should be convinced that the inhabitants were enchanted with this change of fortune; and the means that he employed to spread this opinion must not be passed over in silence. He had himself sent for the deputies of the island of Elba, to whom he had confided the mission of coming to thank him for having seized their country. These poor souls had just arrived in Paris, in no small embarrassment about their office: 'The deputies from the island of Elba,' he wrote on this occasion, 'will be presented to the Minister of War, who will invite them to dinner, will present them to the ministers, the generals, etc. *The Minister of War will order three thousand francs to be given to each of them*—he will inform them that at their presentation on the 15th (to the Consul), they must make *a short speech in which they will express the pleasure felt by the inhabitants of the island of Elba at being united to France*.'[1]

The First Consul could not possibly be ignorant of the deep dissatisfaction that this union of the island of Elba and of Piedmont would produce in England. The English negotiators had often expressed their views on the subject; but knowing the strong desire of the British Government to keep peace, he had only regarded this dangerous legalisation of a state of things already existing, but not been sanctioned by law, as an additional means of intimidating them by unexpectedly conjuring up the phantom of war. The stroke was venturesome, for it was confounding the Addington ministry with the English people themselves, who were far prouder and more susceptible. In addition to this indirect menace which seemed to intimate to England that she had henceforth nothing to do with the affairs of the Continent, Bonaparte commenced secret preparations that still more plainly announced his intentions. He inundated England with a host of agents of every kind, engineers, statisticians, publicists, who under the title of commercial agents, and

[1] Bonaparte to Berthier, August 29th, 1802.

under the pretext of preparing the basis of a treaty that he had already declared he would not conclude, inspected localities, made estimates of their resources, visited Ireland, sowed the seeds of an insurrection that was soon to break out under the orders of Robert Emmet and Thomas Russel; examined the coasts, marked the best places for a landing, took the plans of fortifications, sounded the seaports, and discovered by what wind ships of war could enter them; and when later the English Cabinet seized and published the instructions addressed by Talleyrand to Fauvelet, one of these agents, the Consular Government persisted in maintaining in the face of Europe 'that they were purely of a commercial character, and had been customary from the time of Colbert.' It was in the same spirit of insincerity that he tried to explain Sebastiani's mission to the Levant, a mission not less significant, and which also dates from the month of September. This new kind of commercial agent had orders to start for Tripoli, where he was to conciliate the Bey, then to visit Egypt and afterwards Syria. At Alexandria he was 'to take note of all that was in the port, of the English and Turkish ships of war, of their forces, of the state of the fortifications and of the towers.' From thence he was to proceed to Cairo, see the principal Sheikhs, 'observe the state of the surrounding fortifications and of those of the citadel of Cairo; to explain to every one that Bonaparte loved the people of Egypt, that he desired their happiness, that he often spoke of them; in all this he was to take care not to compromise himself. He was to offer Bonaparte's *mediation* between the Pacha and the Beys.' Sebastiani was to continue this commercial journey by going on to Jaffa, 'to examine the state of its walls, as well as those of Gaza and Jerusalem. He was to visit Djezzar at Saint Jean-d'Acre, inspect the fortifications he was erecting,' etc.[1]

If such instructions, together with those given to our agents in Ireland, the language held by the French Government in their despatches and in the *Moniteur*, their recent steps with regard to the English press, their conduct with

[1] Bonaparte to Sebastiani, September 5, 1802.

respect to Piedmont, do not indicate a resolution to recommence war, we must renounce the most legitimate and the most universally accepted historical inductions. And if in assuming so threatening an attitude Bonaparte had in view the maintenance of peace, we are bound to deny that he possessed any political intelligence. He wished for a rupture; he was preparing for it; but he thought he could reserve to himself the choice of the moment, he reckoned upon the terror that he inspired to remain master of the situation, and to keep back or let loose the tempest as he pleased. One circumstance powerfully contributed to this illusion, in the same way as it had enabled him to carry out his audacious determination with regard to Piedmont: this was the incredible state of dependence in which he held the Continental powers at this time by means of the settlement of the Germanic indemnities.

The treaty of Lunéville, which gave us the Rhenish Provinces and withdrew Tuscany from the House of Austria to give it to the House of Bourbon, had stipulated that the princes dispossessed of their dominions by these different cessions of territory should be indemnified in Germany by secularising the ecclesiastical principalities. It was easy to effect such a change, for these ecclesiastical sovereignties being elective, and several of the holders having died during the interval, they had only to refrain from naming a successor in order to render the indemnities available. It was of the greatest and most vital importance for Germany, and for the princes also, that this settlement should be made among themselves instead of recourse being had to foreign intervention. But the inordinate cupidity of Prussia and of Austria, impatient to seize the best part of the spoils, the distress of the princes of the second and third order who were certain of seeing themselves sacrificed to the greed of these two Powers, and the stupidity which this avarice had produced in the minds of the German courts, had speedily rendered mediation necessary, and by a last stroke of penetration they had unanimously cast their eyes upon Bonaparte, to confide to him this disinterested task; Austria alone, better counselled by an experience that

had cost her dear, would have preferred the mediation of Russia. Bonaparte had eagerly seized this occasion of devoting himself to the affairs of Germany. In order to increase the confidence of the princes, he asked Alexander's assistance in the work, and the Emperor, whose vanity was flattered by the step, thus became interested in maintaining our policy. The youth and inexperience of this sovereign, moreover, prevented him from claiming a preponderating influence in a work of this kind. Being henceforth able to impose his authority, thanks to this powerful aid and to the complicity of Prussia, to whom he had decided to give the lion's share, the First Consul had succeeded with marvellous skill in increasing discord, in embittering hatreds, in envenoming grievances, and in exciting ambition and cupidity, while he incessantly talked of his disinterestedness, of his zeal for the greatness and prosperity of Germany, and of his sincere wishes for peace and concord. His conciliatory intentions had been crowned with such success that towards the middle of the month of August 1802, in the midst of peace, at the very commencement of the discussions of the Germanic Body, which met in a diet at Ratisbon, exasperated Austria had half drawn the sword from the scabbard and occupied Passau by force.

The unsettled and troubled state of Europe, the rivalry of Prussia and Austria, the nullification of Germany, the grateful deference of Russia, the complete isolation of England—the natural consequence of all these facts had permitted the First Consul to accomplish the definite annexation of Piedmont without encountering the protestations that such an act would have raised at any other time. The success which had attended this transformation, the perfect indifference of the Germanic powers who were exclusively engaged in fighting over the spoils of the secularised principalities, made him resolve to take advantage of this fortunate circumstance in order to carry out his plans with regard to Switzerland.

After the downfall of the administration of Aloys Reding (April 27, 1802), a downfall chiefly occasioned by the

disloyal manœuvres of our *chargé-d'affaires* Verninac,[1] this unhappy country whose natural dissensions were systematically fomented by our agents, through the immense influence that the presence of our army of occupation gave them, had become a prey to the most painful discords. The Landamman Dolder, whose triumph Bonaparte had temporarily wished for, not from preference for his policy but simply to produce a fresh convulsion in Switzerland, had a minority in the nation. He was incapable of maintaining his power a single instant by his own strength, and even with our support could scarcely hold it against his adversaries. He was no sooner in power than this support was withdrawn, as it had been withdrawn from all his predecessors before him; but this time, a truly extraordinary thing, it was announced (end of July 1802) that the French troops were going to evacuate Switzerland. What had taken place then? Nothing. All the pretexts that had been adduced in justification of our occupation had more force, more reality, and more probability than ever; Switzerland was more divided than before, and instead of being disarmed, Dolder's adversaries were openly exciting a rising of the small cantons against him. A determination so sudden, so unexpected, and so opposed to the precedents of Consular policy, ought to have warned the Swiss patriots of a plot against their country. The First Consul wanted in fact, before he struck the decisive blow, to be able to say that he had done everything to satisfy and pacify Switzerland. How could this be doubted? He had gone so far as to withdraw his troops! What more striking proof of his good intentions could be required? He hastened to inform all Europe of this act of moderation. But what he did not explain in his notes was that he withdrew just when the factions were most excited against each other, thanks to the oil he had thrown into the flames in order to extinguish the fire, and that he left power in the hands of a party incapable of maintaining it, though they were strong enough to create obstacles for their adversaries. It was

[1] *L'histoire de la Confédération suisse*, by Jean de Muller, contains the clearest evidence of this fact (vol. xvii.)

easy to foresee the result. As soon as our troops were withdrawn, the Landamman Dolder was driven from Berne, where Mullinen was installed in his place; he fled to Lausanne, and Switzerland had two governments instead of one. It was henceforth manifest that Switzerland could not be governed without us.

These events took place in September 1802, in the same month that witnessed the transformation of Piedmont into six French departments. Two months had scarcely elapsed since our troops had received orders to evacuate Switzerland. As soon as the foreseen events had taken place, the First Consul sent word to M. de Mullinen, who had come in all haste to consult him, 'that his presence in Paris was useless, that the mediation of France must be accepted, that if he were forced to it Ney would enter Switzerland with thirty thousand men, and that *in that case it was all over with Switzerland;* that in short it was time to put an end to this state of affairs, and that he saw no middle term between a Swiss government friendly to France and no Switzerland at all.'[1]

A few days after he addressed to the Swiss people themselves a proclamation, in which he expressed his willingness to save them by means of mediation. 'It is true,' he said, 'that I had resolved to abstain from intermeddling at all in your affairs, . . . but I cannot and ought not to remain insensible to the calamities to which you are a prey; I recall my resolution.' He then ordered a general dispersion of all armed assemblages, a convocation of the Senate at Berne, a meeting at Paris under the title of consultative assembly of the deputies of the Senate and all the citizens who had held public offices under the central Government during the last three years: then he added —'Inhabitants of Helvetia, let your hopes revive! Your country is on the brink of a precipice, it will now be saved. . . . There is not a single man of sense who does not perceive that the mediation I undertake is a blessing of Providence . . .; it is time that you recognise, in short, that if the patriotism and union of your ancestors founded

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, September 23, 1802.

your Republic, the bad spirit of your factions will infallibly cause its ruin.'[1] This is almost word for word the same speech that he made to the Spanish in 1808, when after still more odious machinations he invaded their territory: 'Spaniards, your nation was expiring: I saw your calamities, I am going to heal them . . . I wish to earn an eternal title to your love and gratitude. . . . Spaniards, be full of hope and confidence, remember what your fathers were.'[2] We see that the policy varied little: in both cases it was the same violence and the same hypocrisy; but the Swiss in 1802 had not unfortunately the same means of resistance as the Spanish in 1808.

Ney was on the frontier with thirty thousand men. The Swiss did not offer a prompt submission; he therefore received orders to invade the territory of the Confederation, concentrating his troops and operating by masses in such a way as to crush rapidly all opposition to his advance. He was, moreover, to draw up a proclamation, in which he was to take care to mention that both the small cantons and the Senate had asked the mediation of the First Consul, who, touched by the calamities to which they were a prey, *had yielded to the solicitations of the Swiss people.*[3] This was a very important fact to state, but it was easier to make the assertion than to get Europe to believe it. Bonaparte had not thought of using this decisive argument in his own manifesto. The Swiss little suspected themselves of a taste for foreign intervention, although a small minority of paid men and misguided democrats had in fact called this scourge upon their country; but who should dare to doubt the sincerity of a declaration supported by thirty thousand bayonets? They did however protest, and appealed to the Powers in the name of European equilibrium, and of the old principle of Helvetic neutrality that had been guaranteed by so many treaties. But, as Bonaparte had foreseen, Prussia and Austria occupied with disputing at Ratisbon the shreds of German territory that he had

[1] Proclamation of September 30, 1802.
[2] Proclamation of May 25, 1808.
[3] Bonaparte to Berthier, October 15, 1802.

abandoned to their cupidity did not breathe a word, and Alexander, flattered by being associated with a hero as the second arbiter of Europe, silenced M. de Markoff, who understood much better than his master the emptiness and the danger of this derisive honour. England alone remonstrated, although she was infinitely less interested in the question than the Continental Powers, whose security essentially depended upon the maintenance of Swiss neutrality. A note from Lord Hawkesbury, of the 10th of October,[1] was communicated to the French Government by M. Merry. The English Cabinet reminded them that the principle of Swiss neutrality was bound up with the peace and equilibrium of the European Powers, that the treaty of Lunéville, signed the preceding year, had formally recognised and guaranteed it; in spite of all that had taken place, they would not yet believe in the enslavement of an independent nation.

In reply to this note, extremely moderate in form, but firmer in tone than any previous communication from the Addington Cabinet, the First Consul instructed Talleyrand to send Otto a declaration couched in language which shows how sure he already felt of his ascendency over Europe, and what use he intended to make of it.[2] An English agent, Mr. Moore, having said in order to encourage the Swiss in their resistance that England would not permit the independence of their country to be sacrificed, Otto had orders to declare that if the Britannic Ministry had recourse to any notices or publications from which it might be said that the First Consul had not done such and such a thing because he had been hindered, *he would immediately do it;* that as for Switzerland, whatever might be said or might not be said, his resolution was irrevocable; Otto was never to speak of war, nor suffer any one to speak

[1] Papers laid before both Houses.

[2] Dated October 23. This note, like many others, has been omitted in the collection of papers communicated to the Legislative Body by Bonaparte. It has also been suppressed in the *Correspondance*, by virtue of the singular system of the editors upon the rights and duty of history. It was M. Thiers, we believe, who first made it known to the public.

of it to him. With what war, moreover, should we be threatened? Maritime war? Our commerce was a prey of very little value. Our ports would be blockaded, it is true, but England would be blockaded also, for she would be shut out from all the coasts of Europe. We should make her live in a constant state of anxiety and fear of invasion. She would no doubt seek allies in Europe. If she were to gain them, the only result would be *that we should be forced to conquer Europe.* The First Consul was only thirty-three years old; *he had as yet only conquered states of a second order! Who knows what time he would have required to change the face of Europe, and resuscitate the Western Empire?*

This expression was the incautious though true revelation of thoughts that had for a long time filled the mind of the First Consul. If we examine it from a diplomatic point of view, it was an act of folly, for addressed not to weak and trembling nations, but to a strong and proud Power, it was equivalent to immediate war, and he did not wish for so prompt a rupture; if we regard it as a premature declaration of his future projects, it displayed a mind strangely intoxicated with the sentiment of its own strength, and one that exaggerated its power beyond all bounds. He had, it is true, at his service, two marvellous talismans; one was an incomparable military genius, seconded by a nation of soldiers, to whom he had succeeded in communicating the fever that devoured him; the other was the marked fascination that the principles of our Revolution still exercised over nations. The Revolution no longer brought them liberty—they had already recognised this; but it brought them certain civil ameliorations, and it destroyed privileges that had become odious. Hence the facility with which Bonaparte had been able to overthrow governments that had for the most part only an artificial existence. Even in Switzerland our occupation had mixed incontestable benefits with the evils of every kind that accompanied it: it had swept away certain abuses, as for example the domination of some cantons over others. But it was a singular illusion on his part to imagine that he

would find it as easy to subjugate nations as to overthrow governments that had no roots. When once the grievances of the subjects against their governments had been redressed and abuses reformed, the benefits of the interference disappeared, and only the injury was seen; foreign domination remained with all the ignominy that it engenders, and it was then only that the real difficulty began, that is to say, the struggle, no longer with decayed and discredited governments, but with the people themselves. It was easy to foresee this inevitable struggle; and if Bonaparte had foreseen it, he would never have talked of conquering Europe; he would never have been so completely the dupe of appearances as to believe that he could do in ten years what the Romans had found so much difficulty in accomplishing in several centuries among the people of the ancient world, between whom there existed neither bonds nor solidarity. It is a humiliating thing for human nature that this famous conception, which was to lead to so much ruin and so many disasters, was at bottom nothing but a somnambulist's dream.

Otto, who was a man of sense, was greatly embarrassed on receiving such a note; he perceived at once its dangerous consequences, and took upon himself the responsibility of not communicating it to the English Government; he only gave them a modified abridgment of its contents. But the British Cabinet nevertheless clearly saw that they were resolved in Paris to pay no heed to its representations, and consequently began to foresee the possibility of a rupture.

Lord Hawkesbury summed up his reply to Otto in this maxim: 'The state of the continent at the time of the treaty of Amiens; nothing but that state.' To which Bonaparte rejoined that nothing had been changed since that epoch, since we were then, as now, occupying Switzerland and Piedmont. By refusing to recognise the Italian Republic and the Helvetic Republic, England had lost all right to intermeddle in their affairs. Moreover, she had herself made fresh acquisitions in India, which completely deprived her of all right to complain, and under no circum-

stances should we suffer her to interfere in favour of Switzerland.[1]

Nothing was in fact changed, except that we had rendered a state of affairs definite that had been supposed to be temporary. The deputies of the Helvetic Republic, elected under the protection of our army, that is to say, chosen and nominated by the First Consul,[2] arrived in Paris at the beginning of the month of December, in order to bring to their legislator the light of their counsel.

Bonaparte had long before fixed his plans with regard to their country. Not being able to dream of repeating the worn-out comedy of the *Consulte* of Lyons, he had resolved simply to annul Switzerland as an independent State. Perfectly indifferent to the two opinions which divided the Swiss patriots, it was easy for him to display, as he said, strict impartiality in their quarrels. Provided that Switzerland was dependent and subjected to France, he cared little about the rest. But this anxiety alone naturally made him lean to the side of the federalists, according to the old maxim of dividing and governing. He saw the Swiss deputies, and tried to please them; he received them with an affability which struck them so much the more, as they had arrived troubled and intimidated by the misfortunes that had befallen their country, and conferred with them for several hours on the changes to be made in their institutions. In this speech, in which he astonished them by the knowledge he possessed of their affairs, by the flow and impetuosity of his ideas, and still more by the ease with which he caught at and refuted those of others, he endeavoured chiefly to prove to them that the geography, history, and customs of their country imperatively imposed on them 'a diversity of governments.' Each canton should have its particular constitution, and be governed as it pleased; as for the central government, the recent discords had shown that it was requisite to reduce it to the minimum, if not to suppress it altogether.[3]

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, November 4, 1802.
[2] Jean de Muller: *Histoire de la Confédération*, t. xvii.
[3] Allocution of December 11, 1802.

Such was the kind of modification that he introduced into the Helvetic constitution, with the aid of these patricians on whom he had lavished so much abuse as long as he had had to complain of their indocility. He made them understand that resistance was useless, that if they would make the necessary concessions he was willing to share the power with them; and most of them accepted his proposal. They surrendered to him their superannuated principles of suzerainty and seigniory; they gave him moreover the upper hand in the affairs of the central government, which was henceforth too weak to contest anything; on the other hand, he left them all influence in the cantons. It was, except these restrictions, a re-establishment pure and simple of the ancient constitution of the Swiss Confederation. The Valais, cut in two by our military road of the Simplon, was not united to France; they wished this to be a permanent testimony of our respect for principles, and it was raised to the dignity of an *independent Republic*. It was generally expected in Europe that Bonaparte would at the last moment assume the presidency of the Confederation; he did nothing of the sort. He selected for this honour the citizen Louis D'Affry, who had been in the service of France before the 10th of August. This fresh homage rendered to the independence of Switzerland was to close the mouths of those who had declared it compromised. We ought however to add that on February 21, 1803, at the time of D'Affry's entrance into office, the Grand Juge Regnier received orders to pay him the sum of 31,000 francs. 'This sum,' wrote Bonaparte, '*is to be taken from the secret funds of the police.*'[1] The same day he wrote to D'Affry—'I have given orders for the sum you demand to be paid over to you. I have also commanded that the pension you formerly received of 1000 francs should be restored to you. I shall take every opportunity of being agreeable to you.' Such letters are revelations with regard to the independence of the new confederation. With the delegates themselves, moreover, Bonaparte was perfectly

[1] Bonaparte to the Citizen Regnier, February 21, 1803. *Correspondance.*

open: he plainly told them that he should remain master of their country, because it suited his policy. 'It is recognised by Europe,' he said, 'that Italy, Holland, and Switzerland, are at the disposition of France.'[1] He went too far in attributing such sentiments to Europe. In the last interview he concluded as usual by showing the point of the sword as his last argument: 'I will never suffer any other influence than my own in Switzerland, *were it to cost me a hundred thousand men!*'[2] The estimate was in reality modest; it was nearly two millions of men that this mediation was to cost us!

The English Parliament had opened on the 16th of November 1802, before all these acts had been accomplished; but plain indications of them existed, Switzerland being covered with our troops, and Bonaparte having declared that he would not suffer England to meddle in the affair. Addington was not yet willing to renounce all hopes of preserving peace, but he saw that in spite of himself he was being drawn into war, and the speech from the throne clearly betrayed this anxiety. The king distinctly declared that, notwithstanding his pacific dispositions, 'he could not remain indifferent to the policy of states, whose interests had always been connected with those of England; for this reason therefore he could not be regardless of changes that were taking place in their relative condition and strength.' He consequently announced the necessity of adopting measures of security, even in the interests of peace. This language, although firm in its moderation, was far from responding to the feelings of animosity and violence experienced by the whole nation, who felt the challenge and were beginning to impart to the debate the concentrated but strong, deep, and persistent passion of the English character. In the House of Lords, the man who was at that time the right hand and the glorious buckler of England, Nelson, was the first to speak, as the one who had acquired the most right to take up the gauntlet. He spoke with that simple dignity that so well becomes the man of action, and confined himself

[1] Conférence of January 29, 1803. [2] Jean de Muller.

to exposing in a short and energetic speech the necessity of supporting the allies of England, and the duty of maintaining the national honour intact. 'I am a man of peace,' he said, 'and I have a horror of the miseries of war; but our honour is the most valuable of our interests; it is to this that we owe the respect of the continent, and it would be purchasing peace too dearly to sacrifice one jot of England's honour.'[1] All the former adversaries of the Addington Cabinet, in the two Houses, rose after him to triumph over the embarrassment of the ministry, and to overwhelm it with its discomfiture. How long had it lasted then, this peace of which they had been so proud, this peace signed in contempt of their foresight? They now declared themselves, after all their fine promises, that it was necessary to prepare afresh for war. But upon what had they founded their illusions? Had the ministers flattered themselves that the First Consul was going to change in a day both his system and his nature? Warnings had not been wanting. Had they not seen him, even while the preliminaries of London and the treaty of Amiens were negotiating, establish himself in Holland, seize the Cisalpine Republic, betray Tuscany for hard cash, lay hands on Piedmont? Had they believed that the union of Piedmont would not become definitive? But the ink was scarcely dry with which the treaty was signed, the wax scarcely cold with which it was sealed,[2] when Bonaparte hastened to accomplish what they had so patiently allowed him to commence; he seized Piedmont and the island of Elba, he thrust the Swiss under the yoke, he consolidated his dominion in Holland, he turned the old Germanic Confederation upside down: again quite recently he had confiscated the duchy of Parma, to dispose of it as he pleased. Was there nothing in all this that threatened the independence of England? Would they wait till he had seized the whole of the continent before they began to act? Bonaparte, exclaimed Sheridan, has made a pact with the French; they consent to obey him only on condition that he makes them masters of the world.

[1] Hansard's Parliamentary History. [2] Grenville's speech.

The natural conclusion of all these recriminations was that the ministry was incompetent, and ought to retire to give place to the only man who could save England in the crisis; this was Pitt. Like all truly great characters, he appeared still greater in time of public peril, so fatal to men of moderate capacity; and all eyes were turned to the place where he was accustomed to sit. But he had had the generosity to spare the tottering ministry the embarrassment of his presence. Addington and his friends bitterly expiated errors that were after all very excusable, for this desire to maintain peace was not a sentiment for which they needed to blush, and their uprightness and excellent intentions could not be contested. Lord Hawkesbury, Lord Pelham, and Addington himself, defended the Cabinet; they endeavoured less to deny the grounds for these reproaches than to show the danger of a rupture in the isolated state of their country. England could not make war for continental affairs if the continent itself refused to intermeddle, an observation that was true enough, and which referred to the useless efforts that their diplomacy, and especially their agent Mr. Moore, had made to induce Austria and Russia to interfere in favour of Switzerland; they however admitted that, while peace was maintained, it was still necessary to be prepared for the eventuality of a rupture that had become possible.

Only one orator of influence defended peace: it is true that this orator was worth a whole army; it was Charles Fox. A generous and very enlightened mind, with an admirable variety of knowledge and abilities, of great culture, an elevated soul open to all noble impressions, Fox had from the commencement of the war between England and France defended the French Revolution against the blind hatred of the Tory party. Even during the Reign of Terror he had persisted in vindicating this cause, though he deplored the excesses that polluted it; he had remained steadfastly faithful to it through all the strange metamorphoses that it had passed through; and now, in spite of the contradiction given by events, in spite of the warnings and the desertion of several of his friends, who

like Sheridan had publicly acknowledged their error, he continued by the most singular of illusions to regard Bonaparte as the representative of the Revolution. Quite recently, towards the end of July 1802, he had visited France, like many other distinguished Englishmen.[1] The First Consul, who was so often ungracious to foreigners who were presented to him,—so much so, that he was once heard to ask Erskine this almost impertinent question, 'Are you a *lawyer*, Mr. Erskine?'—had, however, paid great attention to the powerful chief of the Whigs; he had displayed for him all the insinuating graces of his Italian nature. Fox had experienced some disappointment in seeing the working of this pretended republican government; but he had kept it to himself, for it cost him too much to give up his illusions: we have not a single letter from him relative to his visit to Paris. He had caught a glimpse of Bonaparte's deep hatred of England, of the want of discernment in his judgment of that country; he had endeavoured in vain to convince him of his errors, real or affected, with regard to the supposed complicity of Pitt with the authors of the infernal machine, an absurd supposition in the eyes of any one who had understood anything of the true character of that proud and stoical soul.

In spite of all these deceptions, Fox still persisted in pleading the cause of France, though he was much less lavish of his praise of the Consular Government. He endeavoured to prove in his speech that all the changes complained of were the necessary consequence of those that had taken place during the negotiations, and that they had therefore lost all right to oppose them. No one, he added, saw with more regret than himself the aggrandisement of France, but these aggrandisements were for the most part anterior to the treaty of Amiens, and they were not of a nature to justify war. He spoke with unusual

[1] M. Thiers gives a very interesting account of Fox's visit to Paris in 1801. The correspondence of Fox, as well as that of Lafayette, shows that he did not leave England till the end of July 1802. The *Moniteur* does not mention his presentation to the First Consul till the 2d of September 1802.

warmth, but dealt purposely in generalities, which plainly showed his intention to elude a close and rigorous examination of facts. This great orator, moreover, whose sympathetic nature and easy character had preserved all the philanthropic illusions of the eighteenth century in an epoch so different though so near, was ill calculated to be a leader, because he knew so little of human nature; he was more a man of pleasure and imagination than of action, he was neither steady nor consistent, and his fine abilities were rather literary than political. His correspondence is full of quotations from the poets of antiquity. The sight of a beautiful work of art, the reading of one of his favourite Greek authors, would make him forget in an instant the debates that had most impassioned him, whilst his great rival, working even when at rest, his mind absorbed by a single thought, his eyes incessantly fixed upon the vast theatre where the nations were fighting, observing every scene, every movement, and every sign, was with less brilliancy and less seduction, but with infinitely more strength, the personification of the political spirit. There was in reality nothing more in Fox's arguments than the determination of an optimism that became more and more difficult to sustain. Was there, yes or no, in Bonaparte's last acts, an enterprise formed against the European nations? The whole question lay there, and Fox, who disputed the fact in the House, partially admitted it in his private correspondence. 'Perhaps,' he wrote to Charles Grey shortly after his speech, 'I shall go as far as you in thinking the Swiss business *a just cause for war;* but on the other hand, I am sure you will agree with me that in this instance it would have been nothing but a base and hypocritical pretence, which would have imposed upon no one; and that your victory would terminate in our having Malta, or the Cape, or Cochin, or in anything rather than Swiss liberty and independence.'[1] We see by this that he did not so much contest the lawfulness of the war, as the purity of the intentions of those who wished to make it.

[1] Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox, edited by Lord John Russell, vol. iii.

Fox's speech was very successful in the House, but it was not very favourably received by the public. He wrote to his nephew about the same time, that he was accused in London of being 'an agent of the First Consul.'[1] This accusation, brought by the English public against a man who had for so long been a favourite, shows to what a pitch the nation was excited. However, whether it was that they were satisfied with the more dignified attitude of the Government, or that their anger was calmed by the echo that it had found in the two Houses, this emotion soon gave place to relative tranquillity. It was at this time, that is to say, towards the beginning of December 1802, that the ambassador of the First Consul, Andréossy, arrived in London, and that Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador, was received at Paris. Lord Whitworth was a great nobleman, rather stiff and cold in manner, but his diplomatic correspondence proves that he was a man of sound judgment, a sagacious mind, and perfect loyalty. He had previously been ambassador to Russia, and this appeared a sufficient reason to Bonaparte for implicating him in the assassination of Paul I. The ease and promptitude, moreover, with which Bonaparte imputed the most atrocious acts to his adversaries is a characteristic trait; and it is well to notice it here, because just at the time of which I speak, the trial of Colonel Despard for attempting to assassinate King George was going on in England, a crime similar in every respect to the one of which the First Consul was very nearly the victim; and notwithstanding the strong presumption which indicated that the plot had ramifications in France,[2] not a single voice was raised to bring this grievance, whether true or false, against the French Government.

Although the two nations were now placed face to face, arms shouldered, as it were, in consequence of all that had been said and done on each side, the two ambassadors were received in London and at Paris with demonstrations of

[1] Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox, edited by Lord John Russell, vol. iii. Letter of Fox to Lord Holland, December 19, 1802.

[2] *Annual Register* for the year 1803.

good will and courtesy. There was on both sides throughout the months of December and January a tacit agreement not to broach irritating questions. France did not speak of the English press, nor of the evacuation of Malta, which was not yet effected on account of the conditions put by Russia on her guarantee; nor of the evacuation of Egypt, that had already been commenced but was not accomplished. On the other hand, England did not speak of Holland, nor of Piedmont, nor of the island of Elba, nor of Parma, nor of Switzerland, whose fate was still held in suspense. They seemed to wish to shake off the thought of all these things, in order the better to enjoy the last rays of peace. The First Consul, who had good reasons for anticipating its short duration, sent successive reinforcements to Saint Domingo, to replace the army of expedition that had been carried off by the yellow fever. Fifteen thousand men had started during the months of November and December; fifteen thousand more were very soon to follow them.[1] He was a man who would rather squander ten armies in an enterprise than give up his conquest. At home he had never been more sure of his power. The vote upon the Consulate for life had struck his enemies with stupor and dumbness. He had taken advantage of this increase of power to get rid of Fouché, a useful man who had had the weakness to think himself necessary, and who had shown on some occasions more penetration than he had been asked for. Despots dislike instruments that reason. Fouché lent himself, he never gave himself: it was this especially that Bonaparte could not pardon. Rœderer, who had become too exacting on the strength of his services, was disgraced at the same time, as well as Bourrienne, who was accused of venality—a crime that had only become capital since Bonaparte had wished to get rid of him: his real offence was that he allowed it too often to be seen that he had been the former equal of his master in the Military School, and his companion in the days of his youth and poverty. The First Consul owed a great deal to these three

[1] *Bonaparte à Leclerc*, November 27, 1802. To Decrès, February 5, 1803.

individuals, but he was never influenced by sentimental reasons. His old favourites were perfectly aware of this. In order to console themselves they had only to glance at the spectacle that his family presented. Josephine, to whom he had refused a religious marriage, notwithstanding her supplications, and who had already strong reasons for fearing a divorce, was living a life of anxiety and tears; Lucien was at open war with his brother for having kept his word to the king of Spain; Joseph complained bitterly to his friend Miot of the conduct of the First Consul;[1] lastly, Louis, reluctantly married on the 4th of January 1802, was lamenting his untimely adventure, which he has himself related in these terms: 'Never was a ceremony sadder! Never did a couple feel more strongly the presentiment of all the horrors of a forced marriage! . . . During the term of this union, which was the misfortune of their lives, the husband and wife did not spend in all four months together.'[2]

Bonaparte was now in the prime of life, and his constitution, which had always been robust under a frail appearance, had at length, thanks to the skill of Corvisart, triumphed over a disorder that he had contracted in the siege of Toulon. His faculties, instead of being crushed by the burden of a power so extensive, had found in it a stimulant that had doubled their strength and increased their activity to an alarming degree. This absolute need of activity without pause and without respite, that haunted him day and night, that woke him with a start in the middle of his sleep, was henceforth the most striking trait of his nature, and became a danger for him from the character of precipitation that it imparted to all his works, and by the multiplicity of adventures into which it drew him. These were the symptoms of the mania of a man of genius, but it was a fierce and incurable mania, so much the more terrible that nothing could divert him from it; for Bonaparte had little taste for pleasure, even for intellectual pleasure. This

[1] *Mémoires de Miot de Melito.*

[2] *Documents historiques sur le gouvernement de la Hollande, par Louis Bonaparte.*

alarming disposition was fed by a prodigious power of work, and by a rapidity of conception that no other man has probably ever possessed to the same extent. In addition to this, he was endowed with an extraordinary capacity for managing men, for rousing their passions, for inspiring in others sentiments that he did not experience himself. This gift, which was a kind of fascination, he owed in a great measure to a power of calculation and dissembling, by which he alone was armed among a people the most inconsistent and the most thoughtless in the world, the most incapable of carrying out a settled plan, and with all their acuteness the most easily deceived, not from a deficiency of penetration, but for want of consistency; a people, moreover, less capable of understanding a Bonaparte, because they did not discover in him any trace of the old national type, in which duplicity was always allied to a certain nobleness and chivalrous generosity; witness Henry IV., who was so popular a hero in France. Everything was so foreign in him,—his origin, his way of looking at things and estimating them, his character, so different from that of his contemporaries, who were all swayed by passions and general ideas that had no hold on him. He has accordingly remained an incomprehensible enigma for the most of them. A generation issued from the eighteenth century could not understand this contemporary of Cæsar Borgia. Hence the illusions and the mistakes of which he was the object during his life; hence the inconceivable errors of judgment that have been made about him since his death. Men of great intelligence have spent twenty years of their lives in studying this character, without understanding more of its springs and motives than if they had to judge a Pharaoh of the twentieth dynasty. We do not recognise him under the good-natured *bourgeois* mask that they have placed over the subtle and hard visage of steel. The figure no doubt gains in morality by this disguise, but it loses immensely in an artistic point of view. They thus cut away the original and profound side of his character, to give place to a certain insipid mediocrity that singularly diminishes its depraved grandeur; and, to say nothing of the claims of truth, so

often disregarded, there is something humiliating for free minds in this half voluntary and eternal dupery.

However marvellous may have been the powers of this amazing genius, it still wanted one thing, without which the most admirable faculties end in a disorderly action: that was moderation, the great regulator of human intelligence, that superior harmony which gives a man self-command and enables him to govern himself, without which he cannot govern others,—moderation, the most divine gift that Heaven has bestowed on mankind. We have already seen by certain signs that this wonderful mind was ill balanced. It had an irresistible tendency to be carried away beyond the bounds of what is true, reasonable, and possible. He had now attained after repeated successes the most critical moment of his career; he had attained it with a dizzy rapidity, by stretching the springs till they broke, by doing violence to men and to things, by overriding his fortune; it was not, however, too late to stop, to change, to be more moderate, to adopt a more sure and a more sensible policy. The two paths were still open to him: it lay in his power to choose between the one that offered him a stable and smooth career and the other that drew him towards the abyss in pursuit of an extravagant greatness; and this definite and irrevocable choice was about to depend on his conduct towards England.

Perhaps it is to a vague sentiment of the gravity of this determination that we have to attribute the sort of formidable silence that succeeded the threatening and irritating dialogue in which Bonaparte was already engaged with British diplomacy. However this may be, the truce was of short duration. Towards the end of January 1803 Talleyrand, urged by the First Consul, again interrogated Lord Whitworth on the attacks of the English press, a complaint that assumed an aggressive character from the mere fact of his persistence. Lord Whitworth contented himself with replying this time that the violence of these attacks was at least equalled by that of the French press; and as Talleyrand denied this fact with the calm imperturbable effrontery that distinguished him, the English diplo-

matist answered, that he had only to open the first French paper to prove it, which was true.[1] Talleyrand then required him to explain the intentions of the English Cabinet with regard to Malta. Notwithstanding all their grievances against us, notwithstanding their grounds for distrust and discontent, this Government was still disposed to evacuate Malta as soon as the reconstruction of the Order and the acquiescence of Russia in the conditions of the treaty should permit them to do so; but three days after Talleyrand's interview with Whitworth an incident occurred which totally changed their determination. The *Moniteur* had just published, January 3d, Sebastiani's report on the mission that the First Consul had entrusted to him in the East.

This report, full of unjustifiable insinuations against England and against her army, contained a very clear and very complete estimate of the resources and elements of every kind that the East offered for a second conquest of Egypt. It filled eight columns of the *Moniteur*. The disposition of the populations towards us; the state of the ports, of the arsenals, of the fortifications, of the strong places, of the bridges, and even of the *powder magazines*, the economical aspect of the country, the feelings of the Sheiks with regard to France, assurances and promises of the First Consul,—nothing was wanting in the picture. There was not a line in this report that did not imply an intention to recommence the expedition to Egypt. Sebastiani went so far as to insinuate that General Stuart wanted to have him assassinated, because, seeing these plots, the general had communicated to the Pacha a former proclamation of Bonaparte's which was a complete contradiction of the sentiments he now professed. 'I was indignant,' he said, 'that an officer of one of the most civilised nations of Europe *should so far lower himself as to seek to cause assassination by such means*.' He gave the exact number of the English forces, and their description; he added that of the Turkish forces; he estimated this double army at rather more than sixteen thousand men, and after having assured

[1] Lord Whitworth to Hawkesbury, January 27, 1803.

them that 'this was not an army, but a collection of men, badly armed, undisciplined, worn out by debauchery,' he said, by way of conclusion, '*six thousand French would suffice to reconquer Egypt.*'

Such is the document which since that time it has been customary to call Colonel Sebastiani's *commercial report.* This threatening manifesto, published at a time when the two nations were greatly irritated against each other, resounded like a war-cry. It produced an extraordinary effect upon the whole of the English nation, and the Addington Ministry, influenced by public opinion, henceforth resolutely renounced their system of peace at any price. Explanations were asked of them, and they on their side demanded the same with regard to this provoking and unusual publication. They ceased to excuse themselves for not having yet evacuated Malta. It was for the French Government to say why they had not evacuated Holland, Piedmont, and Switzerland. The treaty of Amiens had for its basis the state of possession of each country at the time of its signature; it was founded upon *the principle of compensation,* and any increase of territory on the one side implied the same on the other.[1]

The First Consul might have seen by this significant change of tone that in endeavouring to intimidate he had obtained a contrary result. He did not, however, renounce his policy; but he resolved to add to it the language of persuasion, and wished to have a private interview with Lord Whitworth, in which he would employ in order to convince him all his powers of seduction. On the 18th of February he invited the ambassador to come in the evening to the Tuileries; he received him with cordiality, and after a few insignificant words, he began the eternal recapitulation of his grievances against England—the non-evacuation of Malta and of Alexandria, the impunity of the press, the protection given to Georges and other emigrants. Every wind that blew from England brought him, he said, nothing but enmity. He did not want war, but he would not consent at any price to see the English remain in Malta;

[1] Hawkesbury to Whitworth, February 1803.

he would rather see them in possession of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. As for Egypt, he could easily have seized it; but it was not worth risking a war, since sooner or later it would belong to France, either by the fall of the Ottoman Empire or by some arrangement concluded with it. He then indulged in one of those long monologues that were so habitual to him, upon the danger of a war with England, upon the difficulties of a descent, upon the natural forces of the two countries. He allowed that the chances were a hundred to one against the success of the project, but he was ready nevertheless to attempt it, if he were driven to it. If, on the other hand, England would become his ally, what good fortune for her! She would join him in the government of the world; he would share with her indemnities, share influence, make treaties of commerce; she would have everything that could tempt her ambition. Two things would suffice for the realisation of this dream: the suppression, if not of the English press, at any rate of the French papers that were printed in London; the withdrawal from Georges and his adherents of the protection of the British Government.[1]

Lord Whitworth, who had scarcely been able to put in a word during this violent and eloquent rambling, then replied that, with regard to the advantages and aggrandisements of which the First Consul had just spoken, he could assure him that the ambition of his Britannic Majesty was rather to preserve than to acquire; he refuted some of his reproaches, reminded him of the reasons for the mistrust and discontent of his Cabinet; and as he was about to speak of our recent increase of territory, the First Consul interrupted him by saying, '*I suppose you are going to speak of Piedmont and Switzerland. They are mere trifles. You ought to have thought of this during the negotiations; you have no right now to complain.*' These terrible words,

[1] Such is a strict summary of the despatch written by Lord Whitworth the same day, and sent to his Government on the morrow. O'Meara, in his narrative of St. Helena, unsuccessfully contests the truth of this singular account, every word of which bears the stamp of truth.

which bear witness to the obstinacy of him who spoke them, were repeated in French in Lord Whitworth's despatch, and stood out in relief as the salient point of the note. The rest of the conversation was in fact mere idle talk: one thing was clear, that in appealing to England for conciliation Bonaparte began by stating that for his part he did not intend to give up any of his claims. It was also evident that these two facts of grave importance were regarded by him as not worth mentioning. What was he meditating then for the future? What security was possible with him? The expression '*ce sont des bagatelles*' was repeated several times during the debate in the English Parliament, and each time it produced a fresh sensation.

Two days after this interview a new surprise, far graver than anything that had previously taken place, burst upon the English ambassador.[1] The *Moniteur* published the annual *Exposé* of the situation of the Republic to the Legislative Body.

Bonaparte boasted as usual of all the glorious things he had accomplished during the year. In alluding to the state of our foreign relations, he announced the term of our mediation in Germany, and the settlement of the indemnities concluded to the satisfaction of all parties; then passing on to England—'In England,' he said, 'two parties are squabbling for power. One of them has concluded the peace, and appears decided to maintain it; the other has sworn implacable hatred to France. Hence that fluctuation in opinions and counsels, and that attitude at once pacific and threatening. While this struggle of parties lasts, *there are measures which prudence dictates to the government of the Republic; five hundred thousand men ought to be, and shall be, ready to defend and to avenge it.* Strange necessity, which miserable passions impose upon two nations, whom one and the same interest and the like will attach to peace! *Be the success of the intrigue what it*

[1] M. Thiers states that at the end of his conversation with Whitworth the First Consul warned him of what would follow. There is not a trace of this important fact in the minute and detailed account given by the ambassador.

will in London, it will not drag other nations into new leagues, and the Government asserts with just pride, England single-handed is unable to cope with France' (February 20, 1803).

Never did the tocsin, calling to arms, rouse an emotion comparable to the effect produced in England by these presumptuous and insolent words. It was no longer against the British Government that the accusation was made; it was against the English people themselves, who felt that they had suffered an indignity. It was an unparalleled course for the head of a state in time of peace to assume such a tone in a public and official act towards a great nation, which was regarded as the proudest and most susceptible in Europe. Bonaparte already treated them as one of the unfortunate republics whose weakness had placed them at his mercy; he censured their government, their organisation, their struggles—their glorious party struggles, in which consist their pride, their greatness, and their life. And now he dared to menace them openly, to threaten them with his five hundred thousand men, to challenge them to renew the combat—and this challenge, put in the coarse and barbarous form of a display of his forces, he addressed to the English people themselves!

From this moment war became inevitable. The English Cabinet replied to the threats of the *Exposé* by a message from King George, dated March 8, which informed the House of Commons 'that seeing the military preparations that were being carried on in the ports of France and Holland, he had deemed it expedient to adopt additional measures of precaution for the security of his dominions. Though these preparations were represented by France as directed to the colonial service, yet, as discussions of great importance subsisted between his Majesty and the French Government, the result of which was uncertain, his Majesty was induced to make the communication to his faithful Commons, and relied on their assistance to enable him to adopt such measures as the honour and interests of the English people would appear to require.'

We see by this that the Addington Ministry still preserved a faint hope of maintaining a peace which the nation no longer wished for, for instead of confronting the true question of the debate they dwelt upon a pretext, and took up a defensive position. The armaments to which the king referred were real; there was in the Dutch port of Helvoetsluys an expedition ready to start for Louisiana; it is unquestionable that Bonaparte could make use of it against England; he had besides twenty vessels building in our ports.[1] But it is not the less true that this was only a secondary question to the grievances that divided the two countries. We can, however, judge by the tone of this message of the truth of the assertion, so constantly repeated after Bonaparte, that this manifesto was a *provocation.* It announced the necessity of 'taking measures of precaution,' and of being prepared for certain eventualities; but we must not forget that this was a reply, and what was such language compared with the Consular manifesto declaring that *five hundred thousand men ought to be, and should be, ready to defend and to avenge the Republic?* Who had rendered such manifestations necessary? On whose side were reserve and prudence in conduct, moderation and dignity in language? If such a question is to be decided, not according to the principles of impartial and enlightened reason, but after the abject routine of popular passions and national prejudices, we must be silent and refrain from passing a historical judgment.

The next day but one after the speech was known in Paris, Sunday, the 13th of March 1803, Lord Whitworth being present at an audience at the Tuileries, the First Consul accosted him, evidently under very considerable agitation: 'You are bent on war, then?' he said. 'No,' replied the ambassador, 'we are too sensible of the advantages of peace.' 'We have been fighting these ten years,' continued Bonaparte, with increasing animation, 'you desire, then, that we fight for ten years longer; you are forcing me to it!' Then, turning to Markoff and Azara—'The English are bent on war, but if they are the first to

[1] Bonaparte to the king of Spain, March 11, 1803.

draw the sword, I shall be the last to put it back into the scabbard. They do not respect treaties, they must be covered with black crape!' He then returned to Whitworth: 'What is the meaning of these armaments? Against whom are the measures of precaution? I have not a single vessel of the line in my ports! You want to fight, I will fight also! You may kill France; intimidate her never!' 'We do not wish to do either,' said the ambassador; 'we wish to live in a good understanding with them.' 'Then you must respect treaties,' he exclaimed; '*woe betide those who do not respect treaties.*'[1]

We are confounded with surprise, when we think of all that the man had hitherto done, who now appealed with so much assurance to the faith of treaties! It was he who dared to invoke them, he who violated them with one hand while he signed them with the other! He could not cry more audaciously, Woe to myself! This unbecoming sally, which struck every one with stupefaction, was witnessed by two hundred persons. The English Government had hitherto maintained a waiting and passive attitude; on the 15th of March, resuming their anterior notes, they again based their policy on the principle of the state of possessions at the time of the treaty, though without making this an absolute law, and they had no intention of keeping Malta, but only of holding it till they had received satisfactory explanations.[2] Andréossy replied, on his side (March 28), that '*instead of having increased her power since the treaty of Amiens*, France had evacuated a great many countries, *and had had no aggrandisement whatever.*' He then proceeded to give the explanation that had been demanded of him with regard to Sebastiani's report, which amounted to this—that the publication of the report was an answer 'to a book full of atrocious calumnies against the French army; that Sebastiani had thought England would declare war, since she did not execute the conditions of the treaty.'

[1] Lord Whitworth's despatch of March 14, 1803. All Bonaparte's remarks are given in French.

[2] Lord Hawkesbury to Andréossy, March 15, 1803.

The diplomatic communications of the two Powers continued for some time in that circle of repetitions, accusations, and vain or decisive explanations, which could in no way change an issue that had become inevitable. As soon as Bonaparte had heard the message, he had seen that war was imminent, and adopted his measures accordingly. On the 11th of March he wrote to all the sovereigns to interest them in his quarrel; he despatched his aides-de-camp, Duroc and Colbert, to Alexander and to the king of Prussia, to induce them to make common cause with him; he ordered the formation of a flotilla of five hundred vessels and gunboats; he offered, and shortly after sold, Louisiana to the United States for eighty millions. He would have liked to rouse the whole world against England; this did not, however, prevent him from incessantly denouncing the efforts of the British Cabinet to gain the Continental Powers. Seeing the failure of the insulting invectives of the *Moniteur* and of his paid press, he forced the feeble states, supposed to be independent, to furnish their share of imprecations against the English nation, so that the abuse coming from inoffensive people might be less suspected. It was in this way that, at the requisition of his agent Rheinard, the Senate of Hamburg was obliged to consent, by order, to the insertion in the Gazette of the town of an article sent from Paris, and full of the most insulting recriminations, on the occasion of the king's speech and the address of Parliament: 'It would be difficult to say whether such an act is the work of madness, of weakness, or of treason. . . . We are tempted to ask if the message of the King of England is not a joke; if such a farce is worthy of the majesty of a government; in short, we can see no reasonable motive to which to ascribe such an act, if it be not bad faith, sworn enmity to France, perfidy, and a desire openly to violate a solemn treaty. In reading this message, we are carried back to the time when the Vandals treated with the degenerate Romans, when force usurped the place of right, and when by a sudden call to arms they insulted those whom they wished to attack!'

The effect produced by this bombast was even greater than Bonaparte had hoped, for it was almost immediately known that the article had been inserted by authority in the *Gazette de Hambourg*, and that it emanated directly from the French Government. A diplomacy that had daily recourse to such proceedings was calculated to shorten delays, and considerably to reduce all temporising. The English Cabinet, that had hitherto hesitated, at length felt the necessity of substituting for their vague demands for explanations, which were only answered by objections, something more definite and categorical. They accordingly summed up, in the six following points, the satisfaction they required:—(1) The cession of the island of Lampedusa, which they undertook to obtain from the king of the Two Sicilies; (2) the occupation of Malta for ten years, as a guarantee; (3) the evacuation of the Batavian Republic; (4) the evacuation of Switzerland; (5) an indemnity for the king of Sardinia; (6) on these conditions England would recognise the kingdom of Etruria and the Cisalpine Republic.

Such was the result of the intimidations of the French Government. This ultimatum was presented, April 26, with a firmness quite unexpected after the multiplied proofs of forbearance that the Addington Ministry had given; they had not taken this resolution till they had exhausted all dilatory means, and expended the sum of patience allowable to men mindful of the honour of their country. They could not hold power another hour without satisfying the nation. The ambassador had orders to quit France if, at the end of seven days, these conditions were not accepted.

This abrupt change of tone produced a sudden and complete inversion of parts. The First Consul, who wanted to gain time at any price, began to protest about 'his pacific intentions.' He assured them 'that there would be no difficulty in evacuating Holland, as soon as the conditions of the treaty of Amiens were fulfilled.' With regard to Lampedusa, it did not belong to France; it was not therefore in his power to cede it.[1] But as he did not say a

[1] Talleyrand to Whitworth, May 2, 1803.

word on the other points of the ultimatum, Whitworth replied by demanding his passports. This aggravating circumstance softened still more the French Government, that had hitherto been so irritable. 'I understand less than ever,' wrote Talleyrand to him, pretending to see nothing but Malta in this dispute, 'how a great, powerful, and sensible nation can wish to enter on a war, the results of which will entail so much misery, and for so petty a cause, since the bone of contention is a miserable rock. . . . The First Consul, who for the last two months has been accustomed to make sacrifices of every kind for the maintenance of peace, would not reject some middle term, which would cover the interests and dignity of both countries.'[1]

Thus the island of Malta, which but lately was, according to Bonaparte, equivalent to the possession of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, was now nothing more than a *miserable rock.* The middle term proposed was a compromise with regard to Malta, to which the ambassador replied by imperturbably reproducing his six points (dated 10th of May), and again demanding his passports. He quitted Paris the 12th of May, and travelled by short journeys, in order to leave a last chance for a reconciliation that he no longer hoped for. The First Consul tried again, on the 13th of May, to find an expedient which would allow him to gain more time; he charged Andréossy to propose a simultaneous occupation of Malta by the English, and of Taranto by the French, for ten years. 'It is important,' he wrote, 'if this arrangement does not succeed, that Andréossy should make no communication that would leave evidence of it, *in order that the Government may be able to deny that they ever adhered to this proposition.*'[2]

Useless artifice! Bonaparte would not listen to the only conditions that would have prevented the rupture. He rejected as a dishonour a generous, equitable, moderate policy, that would have given liberty instead of oppressing, would have substituted respect for right for a system of

[1] Talleyrand to Whitworth, May 4, 1803.
[2] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, May 13.

conquest, and have reigned by influence instead of governing by force. In order to satisfy a petty rancour against obscure writers, whom the noble hospitality of the English nation protected, he alone had rekindled it in contempt of the advice of his councillors, in contempt of the remembrance of all the evils that were not yet retrieved, in contempt of the will of the nation that was hungering for the benefits of peace; and in order to avenge his miserable affront, millions of men were going to fight for more than ten years, to tear each other to pieces, to die all kinds of deaths, upon all the continents, upon all the seas, at every hour of day and night, in the deserts, upon the mountains, in the snow, in flaming cities as in obscurest villages, from the Tagus to the Neva, from the Baltic to the Gulf of Taranto, in Spain, in Russia, and as far off as India! And this war that he began in order to force England to violate the laws of hospitality towards proscribed men, was to continue without respite till the day when, vanquished and proscribed in his turn, he would implore without obtaining it the hospitality that he had so insulted!

England commenced hostilities as soon as the ambassadors had quitted the territory of the two nations, and seized, so the *Moniteur* says, two vessels, one laden with wood, and the other with salt.[1] The First Consul considered himself authorised by these events of war to decree the immediate arrest and detention of all English between the ages of eighteen and sixty who were to be found in France. They were kept prisoners till the end of the war. The pretext alleged in justification of this unexampled infringement of the right of nations is not less characteristic than all that had just taken place. The acts of hostility of which the First Consul complained, when he accused the English Cabinet of bad faith, had in the main followed and not preceded the rupture, for they had been committed by virtue of an order of the Privy Council, dated May 16, and after the departure of our ambassador. Three days before this date, that is to say, May 13, 1803, Bonaparte wrote to Clarke:—

[1] *Moniteur* of the 22d of May 1803.

'The Ambassador has just left Paris. *War is not however yet declared*, but this conduct necessitates precautions, upon the result of which it will be settled according to the line that the English Government take. *The First Consul's intention is therefore that a general embargo* be laid in the ports depending on His Majesty the King of Tuscany.'[1]

[1] Sémonville received the same order for Holland, and Salicetti for the Republic of Genoa. Bonaparte to Clarke, May 13, 1803.

CHAPTER VIII

A NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN 1803—THE CAMP OF BOULOGNE—FOREIGN RECEIPTS

I NOW commence the account of that unheard-of prosperity which marked the opening and climax of the Imperial epoch. In spite of the innumerable evils and the frightful calamities that accompanied and followed it, this dearly-bought grandeur so dazzled our nation, that for a long time they were neither able to console themselves for its loss nor to judge it calmly by recognising how ephemeral it was. This pertinacity in clinging to illusions so flattering to their pride is not astonishing; all nations who have dreamed of governing the world have been alike punished by a long blindness. It is doubtless a thankless task, that of undeceiving them, of pointing out to a people so proud of this short period of their history how they have missed their destiny in allowing themselves to be the generous instrument of a perverse domination; there is neither glory nor popularity to be reaped in it, and the duty is particularly painful in a country attached to routine, where he who touches certain superstitions is never pardoned. But experience has proved that these errors with regard to the past may imperil the future; we have seen to what deplorable resurrections such mistaken admiration can lead. Moreover this point of view is in itself secondary. Whether the truth displeases us or not, we are governed by her, and experience in all this has been her very humble servant. History has another mission than that of pleasing; it is no more made to be the courtier of a people than the courtier of a king. The so-called patriotic prejudices must learn

to know that it is no longer possible for a historian to be *national* in the narrow sense of the word. His patriotism is love of truth. He is not a man of one race, or of one country, but of all countries; he speaks in the name of general civilisation; he belongs to interests common to all nations, to the interests of humanity, and his people is the people that serves these best. If he is, for example, with France against the Spain of Charles V., he is with Spain against the France of Napoleon I. He is by turns Dutch against Philip II., English against Louis XIV., a citizen of the United States against George III.; but he can only assume, as it were, these different individualities, after having divested them of all that was passionate and excessive in each. His country lies in a region without frontiers, and his cause is the universal immutable cause of right against force, of liberty against oppression. The exclusiveness that some would impose on him was possible in the small states of antiquity, where all foreigners were treated as enemies; it cannot be maintained in the midst of the great European community, which lives the same life, and is fed by the same thought. Again, Rome in conquering the world rose to the notion of humanity, and it is in this that the incomparable grandeur of Tacitus consists. We discover in him, in spite of his prejudices, the man of every time and of every country, or rather we seem to hear mankind pronouncing ineffaceable judgments upon its own history. At the present time the solidarity among European nations is so strong that it requires no great effort of impartiality or comprehension to discern what, in the particular designs of each, may serve or compromise the cause of general interests, and herein lies the only rule of judgment that an enlightened mind can accept.

These reflections suppose that nations have a responsibility less clear and less distinct, but not less real, than that of individuals. Those who deny it ought, if they are consistent with their principles, to withhold the dangerous flattery with which they have so often fed our national vanity, for praise implies this responsibility as much as blame. Nations—and they cannot be too often reminded

of it—are only great in proportion as they rise to the dignity of a *person*, as they show themselves capable of discernment, of will, of perseverance; in this consists the whole secret of their glory or their ignominy. The French had committed a great fault towards themselves in trusting implicitly and without guarantee to the man who had executed the 18th Brumaire; they committed a still greater towards Europe, in blindly adopting the rash and foolish policy which led to the rupture of the peace of Amiens. The consequences of this twofold error were soon felt; they were, at home, the increase of despotism—abroad, the definite adoption of a system of conquest.

When war was once declared against England, the First Consul resolved to render it terrible and decisive. In the still uncertain state of his usurpations both at home and abroad, it was dangerous for him to allow the conqueror of Europe to be seen kept in check too long by what he disdainfully called 'this nation of merchants.' He had accordingly shown by a significant measure, from the first day of the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, the implacable character that he wished to impart to the hostilities. The arrest of English families who were travelling in France on the faith of the treaties and the tranquillising declarations of the *Moniteur*, was an act as unprecedented as it was inexcusable. It had been grounded upon the flimsiest of pretexts,[1] and its author himself afterwards admitted its iniquity[2] by acknowledging, with a kind of ingenious Machiavelism, that he had no other aim in view on this occasion than that of stirring up the British nation against its ministers. Whatever his intention may have been, after such an act of violence the war could be no other than a deadly one. He prepared for such in fact by employing all the formidable activity of his genius to bring together

[1] The order to place an embargo upon the enemy's vessels had been issued by Bonaparte three days before it was given by England. (See above, p. 283.) With regard to the pretext drawn from the absence of a formal declaration of war, it was not more sincere, for England never declared war in any other way than by recalling her ambassador.

[2] *Mémorial* of Las Cases.

the means of striking a fatal blow against the only nation who, in the midst of universal submission, had dared to thwart his designs and despise his threats. He henceforth hated them with a mortal hatred, with all the force of his wounded pride, with all the violence of his rancour against ideas of liberty, with all the frenzy of his devouring ambition. He had long pondered over the attack that he meant to make upon them; he had often calculated the strength and extent to give to his armaments, but he felt that first of all it was necessary that he should have on his side the opinion of Europe, and especially that of France.

Instead of sharing his extreme irritation against England, the French nation, who had become, thanks to himself, almost strangers to public affairs, had scarcely a vague idea of the purely private grievances which had led to the rupture. They cared nothing for the articles in the English newspapers, which they did not read; they felt too strong upon the continent to be alarmed about the occupation of Malta; the question appeared to them one of a point of honour rather than of honour itself. They had hailed the conclusion of the peace of Amiens with sincere and profound joy; they were beginning to reap its healing fruits, and they were expecting from it all the benefits of internal prosperity. It was necessary then to reawaken in them slumbering hatreds; it was necessary again to let loose the demon of war, in order to drive them fully armed against their ancient rival. As for Europe, she seemed momentarily indifferent, and as if asleep. Some of the Powers had been half gained by the flattery, promises, or real advantages that had been lavished upon them at the division of the Germanic indemnities; others, silent and terrified, had not yet sufficiently recovered from their wounds to allow their true dispositions to appear. All these states, either from fear or by resignation, seemed to have decided to remain spectators of the combat: it was necessary to bribe them, to win them over, to compromise them, and, if possible, to force them insensibly to take part against the common enemy. Such was the double task at which Bonaparte was working with an activity, in which we recognise in an unwonted degree that astonishing mixture

of calculation and fury which rendered his faculties so formidable.

In France public opinion had lost all its natural organs. Care had been taken that the national sentiment should not find expression either through a free press or independent assemblies. But if he could not count upon the spontaneous movement of a public spirit which he had systematically enervated and destroyed, it was easy to create a semblance, thanks to that skilful and docile organisation which had placed all the forces and all the powers of the nation in the hands of the Government. Bonaparte may be said to have invented the art, since brought to such perfection, of supplying the want of public sentiment by an artificial opinion, imitating the movements of real opinion just as the contortions of a mannikin mimic those of life. The ancient *régime* had disdained this means. The Revolution had lived by the power of public opinion; the violence of parties had often made it subservient to their passions, but they had neither confiscated it nor falsified it. Bonaparte, who had first reduced it to silence, resolved to appropriate to himself this precious force, by working it with more docile springs. Centralisation had placed all these springs in his hands. All the bodies of State, all the administrations, all the assemblies, all the citizens with any influence at their command, were named and paid by him, and acted on the sign of his will. A word was sufficient to put in action the immense machine which worked the whole country and stirred it to its remotest corners. A national movement was needed; it was commanded, and immediately a perfect phantom of it was had, executed with the punctuality of an evolution on a field of manœuvres. It was the affair of an order given to the prefects and bishops. And this country, hungering for repose, surfeited with military glory, possessing more conquests than she could keep, a stranger to the quarrels of her master, and desiring peace above all things, suddenly resounded with a long war-cry that she was amazed to hear. Gradually deceived by the illusion of this artificial agitation, she became inflamed with a new ardour against enemies who had not provoked

her, in favour of a cause that was not her own. This was at once the trial and the triumph of that centralisation which Bonaparte had just restored with so deep an instinct of the conditions of despotism. It was also the first chastisement for the cowardly apathy with which the nation had suffered this shameful *régime* to be imposed upon them. They had sought repose in it, they had found war.

The signal was as usual given from Paris. The public assemblies received the first watchword. By degrees impoverished, purged, annulled by a long series of changes and skilful regulations, they were living in silence and obscurity, confining themselves to questions of civil right and administration; they had already accustomed themselves to consider politics as the exclusive domain of the executive power. Speech was restored to them for the occasion, by communicating to them a small portion of the diplomatic papers relative to the rupture with England. Daru read an apologetic report to the Tribunate upon the negotiations, and was seconded by Regnault, who endeavoured to prove 'the unalterable moderation of the First Consul' (May 23, 1803). The tribunes replied to the appeal with the harmony and zeal of an assembly in which, since its purging, not a single independent man remained. Boissy d'Anglas predicted with certainty that in this new war all the nations would infallibly be our allies against England, because this power would only have slaves. Carrion-Nisas complained especially of the perfidy of the English, of their mercantile cupidity, of their *barbaric impudence*. 'What!' he said, 'they dare to demand the evacuation of Holland, of Switzerland, and indemnities for Piedmont! Four or five more notes and they would have asked for Marseilles, Brest, Toulon; they *would have demanded the ancient conquests of the Black Prince, and those of Marlborough too!* . . . Yes, men of France, they would have put you on the bed of Mezentius.'[1] Riouffe then rose, and after having outstripped his predecessors in these declarations, he proposed that the Tribunate should go in

[1] *Archives Parlementaires*, published by Laurent and Mavidal: *Séance du* 23 *Mai* 1803.

a body, 'to thank the First Consul for his *magnanimity* and his unchangeable moderation.' Riouffe had already given many proofs of his zeal; he was soon about to retire from his oratorical labours to the comfortable préfecture of the Côte-d'Or.

On the 25th of May 1803 the Tribunate in a body, and deputations from the Senate and Legislative Body, came to compliment the First Consul, following the suggestions that had been made to them. There was only one remarkable word in these stereotyped harangues, it was that of *Consular Majesty*, which General Harville employed in his speech, in the name of the Senate. This expression announced the commencement of a fresh epoch. Bonaparte replied by an address, of which the calm and guarded tone formed an evidently calculated contrast with his violent and despotic language on similar occasions. He wished to strike opinion by the apparent moderation of his attitude. On the other hand, his speech contained assertions of untenable falsity, which singularly clashed with this accent of an innocent and immaculate victim. 'He was forced to make war to repel an unjust aggression; he promised to make it with glory. The justness of our cause was recognised by our enemies themselves, since they were obliged to refuse the mediation of Russia and Prussia, to falsify or to abstract a portion of the papers relative to the negotiation, to attribute to him speeches that he had never made, such as the conversation related by Lord Whitworth, which was *forged matter!* The English Government treated France like a province of India. If we were expected to give them permission to violate treaties as they pleased, *the fate of humanity was sad.* At any rate we would always leave them to *commence violent proceedings against the peace and the independence of nations, and England would receive from us the example of moderation which can alone maintain social order.*'

These words contained an audacious and complete inversion of facts. The aggression came from him, and from him alone; the British Government had only decided upon the war after a thousand provocations, and if they had

refused a mediation offered at the last moment by Russia, it was because they saw it was only a means of gaining time, devised by their adversary. The conversation with Lord Whitworth was of indisputable authenticity; and as for the suppression and alteration of diplomatic papers, it suffices to compare the few notes communicated to our Assemblies with the voluminous documents submitted to the English Parliament, in order to determine on which side was the loyal publicity of free countries, and on which the hypocrisy of despotic systems.

He felt moreover so strongly the weakness and improbability of his accusations against England,—accusations of which it was unfortunately difficult for the public to investigate the truth, that he was never weary of repeating them; his mind was as if it were possessed with the subject, and he incessantly reverted to it, as if to answer the objections of an imaginary interlocutor. In the Council of State, in his private conversations, in the *Moniteur*, he was constantly dwelling on this inexhaustible theme; considering it on all sides, bringing forward endless proofs, as if he guessed a secret and persistent contradiction even under the eager approbation of his flatterers, as if he felt the impossibility of satisfying himself and convincing others. The *Moniteur* published, June 12th, the declaration in which the English Government had stated their grievances against the Consular Government; Bonaparte joined to it an interminable refutation, which may be considered as the most serious expression of excuses that were verbal rather than substantial. If we put aside certain questions of detail which are exaggerated and developed beyond measure, with the evident end of turning attention from the principal point to the secondary, and if we keep to those of real importance, we look in vain for an answer, however specious, to the complaints drawn up by the English Cabinet. To the grievance relative to the occupation of Holland, of which the treaty of Lunéville had guaranteed the independence, the answer is that this occupation was undertaken and maintained by the *will* of the Dutch Government! To the grievance relative to the occupation of Switzerland, disguised

under the name of mediation, he replies that this occupation was executed by the *will* of Europe ! As for the union of Piedmont, for the hand openly or secretly laid upon Parma, Piacenza, upon the Cisalpine, upon Genoa, upon the kingdom of Etruria, he briefly observes *that this was no business of England's.* A second contradiction, as energetic and insincere as the first, was given to Lord Whitworth's despatch on his interview with the First Consul. Instead of having been irritable, '*the First Consul had displayed, in this conversation, a great deal of gentleness, conciliation, and a wish to overcome difficulties.*' Lastly, it was positively affirmed that Sebastiani's famous report had in no way insulted the English army, that Bonaparte had not the slightest design upon Egypt, that the unfortunate passage in the *Exposé de la situation de la République*, in which England was defied to cope single-handed with France, merely stated a fact that was recognised by every one, and was only a legitimate reply to the attacks of the English press.

The echo of these falsehoods, invented to lead public opinion astray, was immediately taken up by the thousand tongues of the immense army of officials. They responded at once to the appeal of the Government in the whole length of the French territory, and every morning the *Moniteur* published innumerable addresses full of imprecations against England, and of flattery for the hero, for the great man, for the providential man, who was so visibly destined to punish the 'new Carthage.' General Councils, councils of arrondissements, municipal councils, prefects, mayors, magistrates, generals, soldiers, every one who depended, in however remote a degree, on the State, was obliged, whether he was willing or not, to figure in this monotonous train and contribute his double share of abuse and adulation. But the uniform tone of these productions, their invariable obsequiousness, the circumspect and studied discipline that was observed in the midst of the pretended enthusiasm, tasted of the watchword and betrayed their origin. This explosion of official anger and imposed devotion left clear-sighted minds cold, but the effect was gradually felt by the masses

so long accustomed to receive the impulse of the Government, instead of communicating it. The getting up of this agitation had moreover been conceived and prepared with all the incomparable art of this master of theatrical strokes. He had combined everything in such a way as to make the effect continue *in crescendo* till it had attained its culminating point. When the addresses, which had filled the columns of the *Moniteur* during the whole of the month of June 1803, began to be exhausted, and the movement to relax, the procession of the bishops was suddenly seen to succeed to that of the officials. After the appeal to the patriotic sentiment came an appeal to the religious sentiment. The agitation of charges and public prayers continued to maintain that of the addresses. The bishops had been plainly invited by a short circular, emanating from the Cabinet of the First Consul,[1] to order prayers for the success of the war against the king of England, 'who was violating the faith of treaties *by refusing to give up Malta to the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem.*' Malta was in fact Church property. But was it well for the first spoiler of the Order of Malta to dare to make an argument of this refusal of restitution? They accepted the invitation with unhoped-for zeal, employing their ministry of peace to transform the war into a crusade. The greater number of these venerable personages had been welcomed in England during the emigration; they had found there not only an asylum and protection, but the most generous help and consideration; for ten years they had eaten the bread of British hospitality. They now testified their gratitude by calling all the scourges of God upon the people who had nourished them. They preached hatred and fury; they invoked Heaven; they raised the population in favour of a war of which better than any they knew the iniquity. They skilfully deceived simple souls that trusted in their word. But were they not obliged to pay to the new Constantine the price of the Concordat? Such were the edifying fruits of this celebrated reconciliation of the Church with the State.

When the warlike appeals of these evangelical souls

[1] Dated June 7, 1803.

ceased to be heard, the agitation recommenced by means of the registration of voluntary gifts, offered more or less spontaneously by the departments, the communes, and private individuals, to aid the Government to meet the expenses of the expedition directed against England. These offerings, ostentatiously announced by the *Moniteur*, consisted either in sums of money or in vessels of different forms and dimensions; they were accompanied by fresh patriotic invectives, which were so much the more violent that with some the excitement began to be sincere, while with others it was mixed with the ill-humour of taxpayers exasperated by the addition of these unforeseen burdens. The latter, in the impossibility of giving vent to their anger against the real authors of their trouble, were very glad to lay the blame on perfidious Albion. In order to form a true idea of the strength of these manifestoes filled with hatred and anger against the nation who were called our *eternal enemies*, against their insolence and their *Punic faith*, against this *great nation tormented with spleen and rushing blindly to its ruin*,[1] in order to judge of the effect that they would produce upon a people among whom it was only too easy to awaken warlike passions and old national prejudices, it is important to remember that in the tribune, as in the press, only one voice was heard in France, that of the Government and its creatures. The situation of the press was in this respect more humiliating and more deplorable than that of the public assemblies. A simple statistic will explain this miserable state of affairs better than the most eloquent dissertation. Of the *twelve newspapers*, to which the Consular decree of the Year VIII had reduced the press of Paris, only *eight* remained, owing to fresh suppressions ordered by Bonaparte; and these eight newspapers counted a total number of *eighteen thousand six hundred and thirty subscribers!* This small number proves the indifference of the public; but if they did not read these papers, it was not from forgetfulness of their interests, but from a very justifiable conviction that they no longer contained the shadow of an independent opinion. The newspapers, kept

[1] *Moniteur* of July 10, 1803.

under the strict supervision of a suspicious and brutal police, continually trembling for their existence that a single word could put an end to, had no other anxiety than that of discovering the master's thoughts, and confined themselves to timid comments on such news as they were permitted to publish. With regard to books, the booksellers were not to offer them for sale till seven days after a copy had been placed in the hands of the police, 'so that a bad work like the poem of *La Pitié* or the Citizen de Sales' book might be immediately stopped.'[1] Poor De Sales had written an insignificant book upon the Revolution, and Bonaparte wrote letter after letter to have him *expelled from the Institute*, as discreditable to that body. Such was the degradation into which the press of Paris had fallen, that had formerly been so brilliant and so highly esteemed in the world! the press which only a few years before had counted in its ranks a Mirabeau and a Camille Desmoulins! And he who had contributed so powerfully to reduce it to this state of abasement, instead of being disarmed by its powerlessness to injure him, appeared never weary of the spectacle of its degradation: the hand of the police seemed to him too light and too gentle; he reproached them for their slowness and their consideration; he went so far as to write three letters in the same day to the Grand Juge Régnier to stimulate his zeal. In the first, he bade him reprimand the proprietors of the *Journal des Débats* and of the *Publiciste*, for having published news taken from German papers, and relative to the *pretended armaments in the ports of Russia!* In another, he ordered him to inform the proprietor of the *Citoyen français* that he was to change his editor. In the third, he directed him to forbid all newspapers to re-publish 'political news copied from foreign gazettes.' '*The Journalists*,' he added, '*are free to repeat the news published by the official paper.*'[2] They had the right to copy the *Moniteur;* this was the only liberty they had left.

Thus, not only was all political discussion interdicted

[1] Bonaparte to Régnier, July 7, 1803.
[2] Bonaparte to Régnier, June 3, 1803.

to the French nation, but news, that is to say facts themselves, the material, immutable, indestructible part of truth, which is independent of our interpretations, and which, when they have once taken place, exist eternally, were only to be made known to them so far as it suited their government. By this means all the facts which would have enlightened their minds, and enabled them to judge the policy of their country, were suppressed by law. An event did not exist till it had been duly stated and legalised by the *Moniteur*. Nelson might destroy our navy at Trafalgar: the insolent fact was not recognised, and woe to him who should dare to allude to it; it only began to exist at the fall of the Empire. This was not even the disposition of the ancient *régime*. We must go back to Asiatic barbarism in order to find anything analogous to it.

The French in reality only read one newspaper, the *Moniteur*, and this journal at the time of the rupture with England was filled for whole months with the abject praise of a single man, an outrageous insult to the nation that he wished to ruin. When we think of all that Bonaparte had hitherto done to prepare the way, we are led to believe that he went needlessly far and exaggerated the difficulties. It did not in fact require so much to bring to a successful issue the double object he had in view—I mean his elevation to the Empire and the definite predominance of a military spirit and the system of conquest. In order to accomplish the first of these facts he had only a word to change at the top of the Constitution; as for the second, he had been working for it ever since the establishment of the Consulate, and he might consider it quite as easy to achieve, seeing the warlike passion which was daily increasing, thanks to his provocatives and the remembrance of his marvellous success. He resolved to quicken this movement still more by putting himself in direct communication with the provinces, which by their geographical situation were called upon to take the principal part in the struggle against England. Independently of the utility of inspecting the coast from Boulogne to Antwerp, and of giving a fresh impulse to the naval preparations, this

journey offered him the advantage of throwing back upon cold Paris the echo of provincial enthusiasm, so easily excited and so prompt to yield to all that bears an appearance of force, power, and size. The Belgians too, animated by a secret discontent, would in their turn catch the contagion of the universal intoxication, dazzled by the prestige of so much glory and power.

On the 24th of June he set out on this journey of two months, which was to be one long ovation. Everywhere crowds collected to see the extraordinary man, whose exploits and unheard-of fortune had already so powerfully struck their imaginations. Towns sent their magistrates to meet him with the keys, according to the ancient custom observed with kings. He crossed the city under triumphal arches, surrounded by escorts of honour; he generally went to the Hôtel de Ville, through streets strewed with flowers, inquired with skilful ostentation if there were any wants to be satisfied, any improvements needed; he had an estimate drawn up, then set out again after a short stay, leaving behind him as a souvenir of his visit the plan of some work of public utility or embellishment, which was, however, very rarely executed. The constrained theme of all the speeches made at these pompous receptions was more than ever enmity to England, and the spirit of infatuation which he wished to communicate took possession of minds the more easily, that this word war, incessantly pronounced in the midst of *fêtes* and banquets, presented only ideas of glory, grandeur and prosperity, instead of the mournful images which it generally calls up. Conquest seemed to be nothing more than a kind of triumphal march. No one could doubt the success of an enterprise inaugurated amid such universal joy; and the town of Amiens, in anticipation of future victories, did not hesitate to erect over the gate through which the First Consul passed a triumphal arch with this inscription: *Chemin de l'Angleterre.* It was in reality the road that Bonaparte had just taken by declaring this fatal war, the road that he was never more to quit. This road, which he continued to follow, without knowing it, when he entered Vienna, Berlin, and Moscow as a conqueror, was to

be longer than he expected, and to be celebrated by innumerable prodigies ; but at the extremity of the triumphal avenue, if his eye had been able to pierce the darkness of the future, he would have perceived with dismay—not the victory that he dreamed of, but the *Bellerophon*, motionless and waiting for its guest.

He did not, however, share the excitement that he encouraged in others. Leaving these simple souls to spread the enthusiasm and confident illusions which he proposed to turn to account while he disdained them, he gave himself up to his political and military combinations, and from them alone expected success. He watched with an attentive eye the preparations for the expedition. France was suddenly transformed into one vast dockyard. In the impossibility of crowding into our western ports all the vessels that were needed, they were distributed among all the inland towns which had communication with the ocean either by a river or a canal ; this presented the double advantage of avoiding obstructions and lightening the task by dividing it. The First Consul had conceived the ambitious and inordinate plan of creating a flotilla large enough to throw 150,000 men upon the coast of Great Britain. The different projects of invasion that had been hitherto advanced, either by the Directory or by Bonaparte himself, had only been bugbears that no one had taken seriously. This time he resolved to realise the threat that he had made to Lord Whitworth : he determined on it in opposition to the advice of all competent men ; and he pursued the chimera, which was not less foolish than that which afterwards led him to undertake the expedition to Russia, with the precision, the cold calculation and methodical energy, which so often redeemed in practice all that was mad in the conception of his plans. However insurmountable may have been the inherent difficulties of this project, it sufficed that it had taken hold of such a mind as his, to make it assume disastrous and fearful proportions.

Our most experienced naval officers, Decrès, minister of marine, Admiral Ganteaume, Villeneuve, Bruix himself, did not believe, or scarcely believed, in the possibility of success ;

each endeavoured in turn to dissuade him from his enterprise. They considered that, with the possession of a long line of coast, holding at our disposal the ports of Holland, of Liguria, of Tuscany, and if need be of the whole of Italy, having in our hands the resources of so vast an empire, it was wiser and safer to employ them in raising our navy, and to wait till it was strong enough to attack the English forces according to the ordinary method of maritime warfare. But the results of such a plan were too incomplete, and above all too slow, to please this impetuous genius. Everything or nothing was already his maxim. What he wished was, not to fight the English more or less successfully, but to annihilate their power in a mortal duel, at the risk of compromising our own for ever. He listened to these remonstrances with the impatience of a man whose mind was made up, and whose extraordinary success had led him to believe that everything was possible. Their objections, inspired by professional knowledge acquired by long experience, appeared to him to be dictated by a spirit of routine, and he could see nothing in them but the timidity of minds incapable of rising to the height of his views, or the contempt natural in professional men for all plans that did not emanate from their own body. He could not conceal the irritation which their criticisms caused him. Now as these admirals had learned what it cost to oppose his designs, and as they could on occasion be as good courtiers as they were skilful seamen, they gave themselves to the work with ardour, in order to diminish the chances against an enterprise which they had not been able to hinder, and which most of them deplored from the bottom of their hearts.

There remained a considerable portion of the flotilla which Nelson had attempted to burn in 1801 ; this formed the beginning of the flotilla of 1803. To this was added an immense quantity of vessels built after new models, of which the dimensions varied according to the nature of the freight for which they were destined. The flotilla was principally formed of flat-bottomed boats, having the grave inconvenience of not being able to stand a heavy sea, but with the advantage that they could run aground at will,

which rendered the disembarkment more easy. These boats, divided into gunboats, large and small pinnaces, prames, and simple fishing-boats destined to transport the ammunition, were for the most part armed with artillery; they were built to go either with oars or sails; they drew from eight to two feet of water; they could each carry from fifty to a hundred men, with their arms and ammunition; and the deepest of them were to serve for the transport of horses and artillery. Their total number was to be raised to rather more than two thousand. Bonaparte reckoned that by aid of this immense armament, and favoured by a calm or a fog, which would deceive the English fleet, or condemn it to lie motionless, he could in a few hours cross the ten leagues which separate the coast of Boulogne from that of England, and throw his 150,000 men upon the English coast. It was not till later, and upon the reiterated advice of his seamen, that he thought of bringing his fleets to co-operate in the descent, by giving them a rendezvous in the Channel, where they were to keep the British cruisers in check. If he managed to disembark his army, he did not doubt of his definite success; it was then all over, according to him, with the English power. While waiting till the completion of his preparations would permit him to strike this great blow, his project offered him great advantages, even supposing it were to remain unachieved. He was about to make England live in a state of continual alarm, to force on her ruinous measures of defence; he was going to exercise the forces of our army, incessantly held on the alert, and employed like the Roman army in raising fortifications, in excavating the new basins of the ports of Boulogne, of Vimereux, of Ambleteuse; and since our conquests obliged us to keep on foot a considerable army to hold the continent in awe, it was better to have it at Boulogne, and in camps that bordered the coast from Antwerp to Bayonne, all concentrated, inured to fatigue, ready to enter on a campaign, than to leave it dispersed in garrisons; lastly, the presence of the main body of this army, animated with an enthusiastic devotion for their chief, at so short a distance from Paris, would inevitably react upon the minds of the multitude and

facilitate the decisive change that Bonaparte was meditating in our institutions.

These secondary considerations, which were regarded by him as of capital importance, no doubt contributed to blind him to the almost insurmountable difficulties which the nature of things offered to his enterprise. Considered as a whole, and reckoning rather largely on the favours of chance, the execution of the project seemed simple and easy; examined more closely in all the successive phases of its accomplishment and with the calmness of an analyst, it appeared the most foolish wager that ever tempted the fancy of a gambler. This immense flotilla had one great inconvenience, that of not being able to stand a heavy sea. The flat-bottomed boats upset with the first gust of wind; crowded with soldiers as they were to be, the slightest bad weather would have been dangerous to them. It was necessary then to reckon upon an absolute calm for at least two or three days, for, as experience soon proved, the flotilla could not set sail in a single tide. Napoleon himself formally admits this in many places in his correspondence, especially in a letter to Decrès,[1] in which he acknowledges that after the English had made this discovery the flotilla ceased to inspire them with fear. A calm did not preserve us from inconveniences of another nature, that were not less grave. If it removed the obstacle resulting from the wind, it did not ward off the danger created by the currents which render navigation so difficult in the Channel. The sea, which rushes into this narrow passage with each rising or falling tide, is in fact the most tempestuous that is known, on account of the insufficient space that is left for it, and the unevenness of the rugged coast. The strength of the currents caused our vessels to drift, and this could neither be prevented by the sails that were useless in a calm, and that were besides too light for the weight they had to move, nor by the plying of the oars, which could not by themselves overcome the current. This was not all; these inevitable driftings, which exposed us to disembark far away from the appointed place of attack, would also in-

[1] Dated September 8, 1805.

fallibly cause the division of the flotilla, and throw it upon the enemy in a disastrous state of dispersion. Our vessels were to cover a space of several leagues. Now not only was the strength of the currents likely to vary in such a space and to be felt unequally, but it would have a very different action on the different boats, some of which would be able to resist it, while others would be carried away; it would in a word produce as many different driftings as there were different dimensions in the flotilla, which counted at least five or six. We can conceive the confusion which would result in the order of sailing, especially if we take into account the inexperience of our sailors and the encumbrance produced by this gigantic cargo; and yet the whole enterprise was based upon the hypothesis of a disembarkment operated upon a single point. The dispersion of Nelson's divisions was naturally recalled, when in 1801 he attempted to burn our first flotilla; and these divisions, moreover, were composed of keel boats, which have much more resistance than flat-bottomed boats; they were manned by the most skilful seamen in the whole world; they set sail not from an opposite shore, but from a much nearer point; and the whole number of the vessels scarcely equalled a twentieth of our present fleet. Who can say what a meeting even with a portion of the British forces would have added to these causes of perturbation?

These forces were not a mere phantom; it was easier to deny their existence than to overcome them. The French addresses invariably invoked the remembrance of Cæsar and of William the Conqueror. But times had changed prodigiously since these two epochs. Cæsar had not found a single bark of the enemy to defend the approach of his eight hundred vessels to the shore; he had only had to fight in England with half-savage hordes. The conquest of William had not met with much more formidable obstacles. Since then all the different elements, Celtic, Danish, Saxon, Norman, which form the stock of the English nationality, had been merged and blended, and from this fusion had resulted a people admirably balanced, and made as it were for politics, accustomed to govern themselves, proud of their

liberties, placed in the first rank by their intelligence, their energy, their culture, their wealth, and their national spirit. For a century especially their strength and resources had developed to such an extent, and they had so many times fought against us with advantage, in spite of the numeric inferiority of the population, that they could without fear regard the tempest that was about to burst upon them. The British Government did not conceal from themselves that it was no longer an ordinary war, but a mortal duel, in which they had just engaged with the First Consul; they knew, if by nothing else, by the spectacle of the whole of Europe, complaisant or subjugated, all that the genius of their adversary was capable of, and they had proportioned their efforts to the greatness of the struggle that was about to open. In this respect, moreover, they had had no need of sham demonstrations of a feigned zeal to stimulate the patriotism of the nation. Acquainted from the onset with all the phases of the debate through the daily discussions of a free press and the admirable speeches of their statesmen and great orators, the English people had not remained in ignorance on a question in which their honour was so directly interested; they had enlisted with passionate ardour, they had regarded Bonaparte's insults to their representatives and institutions as addressed to themselves, and latterly especially this feeling had been manifested with so much strength, that Addington, hitherto wavering, had been driven to the alternative of breaking with France or resigning the Ministry. It was not necessary then to excite public enthusiasm, but only to direct it. For this task was employed not a body of officials obeying an order, breathing in drill a fury regulated on the tone of a ministerial circular, and imitating as far as possible the spontaneity and animation of popular agitations, but the *élite* of the nation, every one in England who had influence either by rank, riches, popularity, genius, or virtue. Everywhere private effort sustained and often outstripped that of the Government; and instead of complaining of the sacrifices that were demanded of the nation, the citizens reproached them for not asking enough. This is so true, that in order to over-

throw the Addington Cabinet, Pitt made use of no other arm than a motion for additional forces.

England possessed at the time of the rupture a regular army of 130,000 soldiers, and a militia amounting to about 70,000 men; there was added to this, first a reserve of 50,000 men, drawn by ballot; afterwards, when the news of a descent, in which no one had at first believed, became more probable and began to gain credit, the Ministry presented and had voted, at the request of the opposition themselves who were incessantly reproaching the Government with the insufficiency of their measures, a bill of military service, giving them power to call to arms all able-bodied men from the age of seventeen to that of fifty-five. This right, which they only used with moderation, gave before the end of the summer of 1803, according to Addington, an army of 300,000 volunteers, who were daily practised in manual exercises. These different forces formed a total number of 550,000 men; not all equally efficient, it is true, but all the more likely to improve, because they would have to fight, not for some distant conquest, but for their hearths and their national existence. An official statement shows that in the month of December of the same year, the number of volunteers rose in England to 379,943, and in Ireland to 82,241; a significant progression, if ever there was one.[1]

This army has been spoken of with a disdain that displays both a want of discernment and a want of memory. Our volunteers in 1792 and '93, those of Spain in the years that followed the invasion, those of Prussia in 1813, have sufficiently proved what such armies can do in the hour of a great crisis. Would they maintain that the English people had less energy and less patriotism than the nations I have just named? It is needless to refute so strange an argument; while we may add on behalf of the English defence, that if Bonaparte's 150,000 men had disembarked on the island, they would have remained there hemmed in as in a listed field, without any means of repairing their losses. At the same time all the means of

[1] Annual Register for the year 1803.

defence that the circumstances rendered necessary were organised. Fortifications were raised around London to secure the capital from a *coup-de-main*, and to give the army time to march to its relief. A system of signals was arranged for giving the alarm at the first appearance of the enemy; and large carriages drawn by six horses and capable of conveying sixty men at once, were placed at the disposal of each corps, to facilitate the concentration of troops upon the rallying points.

The naval preparations were not inferior to those of the land force. On the 10th of June a levy of 40,000 sailors had been added to the 80,000 that England already possessed upon her ships of war. Seventy-five vessels of the line, which number soon after reached a hundred, more than a hundred frigates, several hundred brigs and corvettes, eight hundred gunboats more especially employed in the defence of the coast, lastly, an immense quantity of advice-boats making a kind of telegraphic network,—such was the formidable armament[1] which at once protected England like a moving rampart, blockaded our ports, and pursued our fugitive squadrons over the seas. And in order to give an idea of the way in which it was sustained by the patriotic ardour of the whole nation, it is enough to remember that a man like Pitt—I mean a man who had acquired a perfect right to believe that he was doing enough for his country in holding his place in the Councils of State—spent the rest of his life, though his health was already visibly shaken, in daily exercising the 3000 volunteers that he had himself recruited at Walmer Castle, and in obtaining as many as a hundred and fifty gunboats from the surrounding neighbourhood. As for the expenditure that such a display of forces necessitated, it was met provisionally by a loan of twelve millions sterling, and by an increase of the excise and income-tax for a sum nearly equal to that of the loan.

[1] I here give the size of the navy after Pitt's recall to the Ministry, for under the preceding Cabinet it was rather less than this number, as may be seen by Tierney's speech in favour of the Administration of Lord St. Vincent, at that time First Lord of the Admiralty: *Annual Register for the year* 1804.

These extraordinary resources, added to those of the enormous budget—of which England henceforth bore with ease the burden that would have overwhelmed any other nation—sufficed for the first necessities and placed the English Cabinet in a position to create diversions against us either in Europe or in France itself.

By the side of this picture it would be well to place an account of our finances, and especially of the means that were proposed to cover the excess of expenditure occasioned by the war; for if the formulas and financial errors of that time are similar to those of our own, and offer little interest for history, it is not so with the mode employed for the creation and collection of extraordinary resources. The budget voted in March 1803, under the imminence of the rupture with England, had already partly provided for the burdensome needs with which this eventually threatened us; 89,000,000 had been added to the public taxes, which in the preceding year had not exceeded 500,000,000. But this budget, however large it may have been for the epoch, was far from meeting the expenditure that such a colossal enterprise entailed. For him who had conceived it, and upon whom alone fell the responsibility, there were only two honourable and regular ways of covering the expense, to make a loyal appeal to the nation either for a loan or for an increase of taxation. Since they wished for the war, at least so it was said, they ought to know the cost and be ready to pay for it. But the First Consul was, it appears, a lover of economy, and a loan was repugnant to his principles. His principles however gave way to a number of other proceedings far more questionable; and it is not difficult here to discover his real motive. What would have become of the popularity of this war, what would have become of its author especially, if he had had to enumerate beforehand the sacrifices of every kind that the country was called upon to make? Sacrifices for a national war can be demanded without fear; but it is dangerous to claim them for a war of ambition. Between Bonaparte and the turbulent democracy that applauded all his military projects there was henceforth a tacit pact: he might drive

them into war at his pleasure; but on condition that, instead of feeling its weight, they were only to experience its advantages.

The First Consul, moreover, had unfortunately to make no effort of invention in order to create gratuitous additional resources to our insufficient finances: his past conduct offered him, in this respect, all the expedients that he needed. In the war of Italy he had filled by his exactions the exhausted treasury of the Directory; but although collected from populations that we were supposed to liberate, these despoiling taxes could in a certain measure invoke for excuse the maxim that 'war ought to support war.' But since his accession to the Consulate this hitherto exceptional fact had been made general; it had become normal; it had been applied no longer to conquered territories or hostile countries, but to those of our allies. The two campaigns of the year 1800 had been in a great measure prepared and maintained with the money of friendly nations who had become our tributaries.[1] Peace had diminished the charges that burdened them, but it had not put an end to them. Everything is connected in a political system, and all oppression implies spoliation. The half-threatening attitude that Bonaparte had assumed towards the great European Powers, his invasions accomplished or projected of weak countries, imposed on him the maintenance of an army out of all proportion to the resources of France. This army he was forced to keep up at the expense of neighbouring nations whom we were supposed to protect. Our budgets contained even in the times of peace real subsidies inscribed under the name of *foreign receipts*, an ingenious euphemism which gave a decent and regular air to an act that was hardly so. The portion of this tribute which the Government presented to the public—it did not always suit them to give the whole—amounted for the North of Italy alone to a sum of 23,000,000. At present, owing to the war, it was a sum of 100,000,000 at least that had to be procured annually. He consequently resolved to extort it by fair means or foul, not only from nations that

[1] See on this subject, vol. i.

were our vassals, such as the Dutch, the Genoese, and the Italians, but from all those countries whose weakness hindered them from defence, like Naples, Spain, Portugal, and Hanover.

Hanover had for sovereign the king of England, but the administration of this country had long since been entirely independent of the English Cabinet. At the close of the wars of the eighteenth century, ministers were seen to make themselves popular by maintaining that Hanover was an embarrassment to England, and ought to be a separate state. It formed part of the Germanic Confederation, governed itself, and though the Elector of Hanover and King George III. of England were one and the same, the two sovereignties were in reality distinct and separate. This situation, which was not unique in Europe, had been sealed by treaties, and recognised by the French Republic itself. In 1795, at the time of the treaty of Basle, France had recognised the neutrality of George in his capacity of elector of Hanover, even when she was at war with him as king of England. But such distinctions were both too metaphysical and too favourable to the independence of the weak, to please the First Consul: 'If Hanover could furnish two hundred thousand men,' he caused the *Moniteur* to say, 'King George would not invoke the neutrality.'[1] The hypothesis seemed to him amply sufficient to justify hostilities. On the morrow of the rupture Mortier had rushed upon Hanover. The Hanoverian army, incapable of resisting us, had been constrained to capitulate; and the electorate remained in our hands in spite of the alarm of Prussia and the discontent of the humiliated Confederation. The occupation of Hanover would perhaps lead sooner or later to a war with Europe, but in the meantime he laid hands upon all the resources of this country, confiscated all property belonging to the elector, seized three thousand horses, and thus thirty thousand men of our troops were lodged, fed, and equipped at the expense of foreigners; beyond this present advantage our policy did not look.

The kingdom of Naples was more of a stranger than

[1] *Moniteur* of June 14, 1803.

even Hanover to the new war. Although at another epoch she had been an ally of England, she had made a separate peace with us, and only asked to maintain her neutrality. But did we not require the position of Taranto in order to threaten Malta and Egypt; and did we not also need her subsidies? General Saint-Cyr therefore received orders to enter the states of the king of Naples without further ceremony, to place garrisons in Pescara, Otranto, Brindisi, and Taranto, and to demand that his troops should be 'paid, fed, and clothed by the king of Naples.'[1] We had, thanks to this expeditious proceeding, a second army maintained at the expense of foreigners. In reply to the queen of Naples, who wrote trying to make him relent, Bonaparte protested his constant desire to be agreeable to her. He agreed in principle that the traditional policy of France was to aid a weaker state whose well-being was useful to our commerce; but 'why did she maintain at the head of the administration a man whose wealth and affections were centred in England?' In other words, why did she dare to govern her kingdom as she pleased? Moreover, continued Bonaparte, it was *very repugnant to him to intermeddle in the private affairs of other states, and it was only for the sake of being sincere* that he had given the queen the true reason of his conduct![2] General Oliver, who commanded our troops in the pretended kingdom of Etruria, ceded less than two years before to the House of Spain, and now governed as a department of France, received at the same time an intimation from Paris to put Leghorn in a state of siege. Murat was asked to make known 'what the kingdom could furnish towards the common defence.' Liguria, which already served us for a garrison and a naval station, received on the same occasion a supplement of troops, which she was also to maintain at her own expense, contracting moreover the obligation to furnish a new corps of twelve hundred men. Very soon after, a regular treaty, dated January 24, 1804, which by a very superfluous precaution Bonaparte made this unfortunate

[1] Bonaparte to Murat, May 23.
[2] Bonaparte to the queen of Naples, July 28, 1803.

Republic sign, under pretext '*of drawing closer the ties that united the two states*,'[1] obliged her to furnish us with a corps of four thousand sailors. In return for this sacrifice so enormous for so small a territory, the First Consul dared to offer the Genoese the derisive compensation of a promise, by which he himself engaged to force England *to recognise the independence of Liguria* (Art. VI.)

The whole of Italy being thus taxed, another convention, concluded at Paris the 25th of June 1803, regulated the portion falling to Holland. The Batavian Republic had only one interest in this debate, that of preserving her neutrality and, if possible, her independence. At the time of the negotiations for the peace of Amiens, already subjugated and dragged in spite of herself in the wake of France, she had timidly endeavoured to insert a clause in the treaty, consecrating in fact the independent existence that was so liberally recognised in words, but an injunction as hard as it was peremptory, dictated by the First Consul to M. de Hauterive, had immediately recalled to her her real situation: 'States which, like Holland,' said this note, 'have been vanquished and conquered, after having made war against France, ought to spare us the embarrassment of reminding them of the principle of their present existence: *it is from us that they hold this existence; we owe them nothing, and they owe us everything!*'[2] If this was the case, what was the use of the long and odious comedy of the treaty of Lunéville, and of so many solemn declarations guaranteeing the independence of the Batavian Republic? And what was the good of *conventions* with a *vanquished and conquered country?* There is something more revolting than the brutality of force, that is its cowardice and its hypocrisy. Be this as it may, if any illusions remained in the minds of the patriots, who had flattered themselves that they could save the interests of their country by dint of submission and deference to the French Government, the treaty of the 25th of June showed them how they had been

[1] This is the very formula employed in the treaty. See de Clercq, *Recueil des traités de la France*, etc., vol. ii.

[2] Despatch from M. de Hauterive to Joseph, January 6, 1802.

deceived. The Batavian Republic was to maintain eighteen thousand men of our troops, independent of her own, which amounted to sixteen thousand, forming a total of thirty-four thousand men. She was besides to furnish five ships of war, five frigates, a hundred gunboats, carrying from three to four hundred cannons, two hundred flat-bottomed boats, and several hundred transports. Such was the fearful requisition that he ventured to lay upon a friendly people, who, drawing their means of subsistence from their navy and their colonies, saw at once all the source of their riches dried up. In return the French Republic guaranteed to Holland *the integrity of her territory and the restitution of her colonies* (Art. V.) The First Consul thus engaged to resolve the singular problem, which consisted in restoring a part by keeping the whole!

The Helvetic Republic, which had become subject to us since the act of mediation, required to be treated with much more consideration than Holland. Switzerland by her geographical situation and the energy of her inhabitants could at a given moment become a grave danger for us; she offered moreover but slight material resources, and the exactions which had furnished funds for the expedition to Egypt had ruined her for a long time. It was useless therefore to think of obtaining money from her; he demanded men. She engaged, by a capitulation signed at Friburg, September 27, 1803, to furnish us with an army of sixteen thousand men, besides a depot of four thousand men charged with the supplies. These troops were to be maintained at our expense. A treaty of alliance offensive and defensive, signed the same day, stipulated that in case of an attack on the French territory, the cantons would furnish us with eight thousand men more, which raised the total number of the Swiss contingent to *twenty-eight thousand men.* This placed nearly a twentieth of the male population at the mercy of the chances of war, and that for the defence of a power that had deprived Switzerland of her national existence.

There remained Spain and Portugal to ransom. Portugal was fortunately for herself rather beyond our reach, not,

however, far enough to be completely sheltered from our exigencies. Drawn willingly or unwillingly into the orbit of England, this little state had formerly been at war with us, but without being able of itself to do us either good or harm; its only wrong consisted in having joined our enemies, against whom it had been impossible for it to defend itself. It had expiated this wrong; and we had imposed on it a most burdensome peace; thanks to the succour that Spain had furnished us with. Since then it had given us no cause of complaint. As for Spain, she had a thousand reasons for discontent and irritation against us. The interference of the First Consul in the internal affairs of this country, his openly threatening attitude at the time of the Spanish co-operation against Portugal, his cynical want of faith with regard to the kingdom of Etruria, in exchange for which he had received Louisiana, and of which he still remained the absolute master, his insulting proceedings towards a weak-minded king, who was full of goodness, attachment, and admiration for himself; lastly, the sacrifice which at the time of the treaty of Amiens he had brought upon Spain by the abandonment of the island of Trinidad,—an abandonment that was contrary to all our engagements, and beyond all this, the rancour of a favourite, vain and light, but by no means perverse, whom he had chosen to caress and humiliate by turns, all these accumulated grievances had caused a great deal of coolness in our relations with the Spanish Government. Like Holland, Naples, Switzerland, Genoa, Portugal, and Etruria, exhausted Spain would have preferred to remain neuter in the quarrel which had just begun; but in order to maintain such a position she lacked one thing, the only one that would have been efficacious,—force! The First Consul had moreover a terrible arm against her, of which he was not a man to divest himself: it was the treaty of St. Ildefonso.

This treaty, concluded in 1796 between the king of Spain and the French Republic, had bound the two states by an alliance *in perpetuity*, to terms by which they engaged to sustain each other in case of war by land and naval forces, the amount of which was foreseen and fixed. In

order to place the required power under the necessity of executing it, a simple demand was to suffice, 'without any need of entering into a discussion relative to the question as to whether the war was offensive or defensive' (Art. VIII.)[1] Such a convention was a monument to the imbecility of the monarch and the carelessness of the minister, for its infallible effect was to place the weak power at the discretion of the stronger.

In order to judge of the kind of interpretation that Bonaparte gave to this treaty, there is no need to ask what he would have replied if the king of Spain had thought of invoking his succour for any war; it is sufficient to recall his conduct at the time of the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens. Spain would not then cede the island of Trinidad at any price, she had a thousand times the right to claim the *casus fœderis* and require us to continue the war; he had compelled her by his threats and intimidations to abandon to the English this ransom of our own colonies. Yet the treaty of St. Ildefonso plainly said that peace 'was only to be made by common accord;' it added that the power attacked could only make a separate peace on condition 'that it was *not to the detriment of the auxiliary power*' (Art. XIV.)

This unequal treaty, wrested from an incapable and frivolous minister, was not only rightfully null and void from the beginning, because, supposing it had been executed in good faith, it placed the two nations at the mercy of the caprice of a foreign government, but it had since been invalidated by all the violence that the First Consul had offered to Spain, and by all the violations of which he had himself been guilty. Bonaparte did not the less invoke it, in order to compel Spain to declare war against a nation with whom she had every good reason for living in peace; but as he expected little service from a co-operation exacted by force, he declared that he would be contented with a subsidy in money, which he fixed at six millions per month or seventy-two millions per year. At the same time the Court of Madrid was informed that if

[1] De Clercq: *Recueil des traités*, etc., tome I^ier.

she refused to accept these conditions, Augereau would enter Spain with the army that was encamped at Bayonne. This court, trembling, divided between the fear of an invasion and the desire to throw off the yoke, embraced by turns the most opposite resolutions. Sometimes they proposed a reduction of the truly immoderate price that was put upon their tranquillity, at others they decided upon vigorous measures, determined on resistance, announced the levy of a hundred thousand men to maintain the national independence. To these undignified fluctuations they added faults of conduct that gave a hold upon them, suffered two of our ships to be taken within reach of the guns of Algesiras, displayed ill-will (natural enough, for that matter) to our squadrons that put into their ports. Our ambassador, Beurnonville, received orders to demand that the governor of Algesiras should be punished, and the levy of the hundred thousand men countermanded, without which our army would immediately enter Spain, and then it was all over with the Spanish monarchy. 'I must,' said Bonaparte, 'by way of conclusion obtain one of these three things: either that Spain declares war against England, or that she pays the subsidy; or that we make war upon her, for this cannot last.'[1] With a minister who had more pride than the Prince of the Peace, this last result would have been rendered inevitable by such proceedings, but the First Consul knew for a certainty that the fear with which he inspired the favourite greatly outweighed his timid desire to revolt; and as the consent of the Court of Spain to the treaty of subsidies was still withheld in spite of these threats, he was resolved to strike her with dismay by one of those terrible surprises of which he alone possessed the secret. The secretary of embassy, Hermann, was sent to Beurnonville with a letter from the First Consul for the king of Spain, and with a note for M. de Cevallos, minister of foreign affairs. The first of these documents revealed to the king the treason and plots of which he was regarded as the victim on the part of the favourite; the second, which was a secret confided to a whole ministry,

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, the 14th and 16th of August 1803.

was intended to make his shame public by denouncing the connection of the favourite with the queen. Beurnonville was to present the Prince of the Peace with a copy both of the letter and the note, he was to inform him that neither would be delivered unless he refused to consent to the treaty. The prince received in fact this communication from the hands of the secretary, Hermann; he there, shedding tears of shame and anger, read the denunciation of his connection with the queen, clearly intimated though in covered terms in the letter to the king, openly revealed in the note to the minister, and accompanied in both with the most bitter insult that a man could receive. The note said 'that the French, who had placed the Bourbons upon the throne of Spain, would find their way back to Madrid to expel a man who had sold France at Badajoz, *that favourite who had attained by the most criminal of all means* a degree of favour unexampled in the annals of modern history.'[1] The letter addressed to the king was scarcely less explicit; Bonaparte entreated him 'to open his eyes to the abyss beneath his throne; all Europe was as much afflicted as it was indignant at the *kind of dethronement* in which the Prince of the Peace had represented his Majesty to every government. It is he,' he continued, 'who is *the real king of Spain*, and I foresee with pain that I shall be forced to make war on this new king. . . . Let your Majesty re-ascend his throne, let him remove a man who by degrees has seized all the royal power, and preserving in his rank the base passions of his character, has never risen to a single sentiment that could attach him to glory, who has only existed by his own vices, and will always be solely governed by a thirst for gold. I cannot but believe that all these facts have been concealed from your Majesty, that my letter will be news to you, *and I am deeply affected at the pain which I foresee that it will cause you.* But after all is it not better that he should see clearly the true state of the affairs of his kingdom?'[2]

Whether we consider the letter and the note in the light

[1] Bignon, *Histoire diplomatique.*

[2] Bonaparte to the king of Spain, September 18, 1803.

of the relations of man to man, or in that of the dignity of a sovereign, they contain the greatest insult that could be inflicted upon him whom they pretended to enlighten. And what were the wrongs of this good-natured king, who was blasted at once as a man, as a monarch, and as a husband? He had been the enthusiastic admirer of General Bonaparte, he had professed a friendship for him, he had been our most faithful ally. But his good faith had been cruelly betrayed. He had been assailed at the time of the treaty of Badajoz, duped in the affair of the kingdom of Etruria, both duped and assailed at the treaty of Amiens; and when he saw his country about to be drawn by us into an unjust and ruinous war, he had scruples and wavered. In order to put an end to his hesitations, the First Consul was about to offer him publicly one of those irreparable affronts from which the coarsest men ordinarily shrink, as if they were conscious of not having the right to inflict a wound that nothing can avenge nor heal, as if they felt that these insults lower him who gives them more than him who receives them. Addressed to a weak, defenceless being, bowed down under the weight of his responsibility, the offence took a low and repugnant character; it resembled the stab of a stiletto dealt in obscurity to an adversary disarmed. A man who had any sense of honour, or the refinement of that humane civilisation of the eighteenth century, would never have consented to employ this Borgian trap. We here find as in all extreme situations the subtle Corsican, of violent and savage passions, who would shrink from no means to attain his end. The well-known tragedy of Bayonne, which Bonaparte, as we see, prepared long beforehand, no doubt presents itself to the mind under darker colours, but it is perhaps less odious than this treachery perpetrated with such refined cruelty.

However, the blow half failed. The favourite, in spite of the threats of the First Consul, again refused to consent to all the clauses of the treaty, a resistance which was very honourable for him, for it might ruin him, and offered him no personal advantage. Beurnonville boldly presented himself to the king and placed Bonaparte's letter in his own

hands; but Charles IV., informed that it contained offensive expressions, refused to open it, and assured the ambassador that it was useless to read it, since the Spanish minister in Paris had received orders to sign the treaty. It was in fact what actually took place. M. d'Azara, informed that it was necessary to submit, concluded this strange alliance, October 19, 1803, making the French Cabinet partly accept the restrictions maintained by the Prince of the Peace, whose efforts were not entirely lost for his country.

Thus subsidies of six millions per month were obtained from Spain. At this price and almost with the knife on the throat the king thought he could purchase his neutrality in the new war, for he flattered himself that in spite of this co-operation, so thinly disguised, England would consent to spare Spain and leave her colonies to her. The submission of Spain necessarily involved that of Portugal, hitherto refractory. The first of these powers was forced, even by an article of the treaty (Art. VII.), to engage to compel her weak neighbour also to sign a treaty of subsidies: was it not the sublimity of art to employ the oppressed to sustain and propagate oppression? This convention was consented to by Portugal the 19th of December of the same year; it is remarkable for the motives on which it is founded. That state, having given us no cause of complaint that we could make use of against her with any show of probability, was supposed to convert into a pecuniary subsidy of sixteen millions the obligations contracted in the first treaty of peace with the French Republic, signed September 29, 1801. Now these obligations were no other than the engagement to shut her ports to the English 'till the peace between England and France,' that is to say, during the time of the war then on the point of terminating. This war had closed, the peace of Amiens had been concluded, the obligation relative to the closing of the ports was consequently annulled. Portugal was not the less forced to pay sixteen millions of subsidies, in order to be dispensed from the execution of a treaty that was no longer binding, and to maintain a neutrality of which she could only save the appearances. Thanks to this assistance so singularly

obtained, to the resources produced by the so termed voluntary donations of our departments and our towns, to the sale of Louisiana, of which we were about to receive the price after having acquired it by a transaction in which we had only given false money, Bonaparte found himself able to meet the expenses of the war, without having recourse, for the present at least, either to an increase of taxation or to a loan, which England, who adopted a less daring policy, was obliged to submit to. This financial system was, we must acknowledge, ingeniously devised to prevent us from feeling the pressure of war, for it threw the whole burden upon nations who were not to reap either its glory or its profits, and who could only expect from victory an aggravation of their wrongs; but, iniquitous and revolting from the point of view of right, it was disastrous for our influence in Europe. 'The First Consul,' says a writer on this subject, 'had taken a resolution, *the justice of which cannot be denied;* that was, to make all the maritime nations concur in our contest with Great Britain.'[1] And starting from this point, he justified the odious exactions that I have just exposed. 'Was it not,' he adds, 'to the *interest* of these nations that England should be crushed? And ought they not to wish to put an end to the *tyranny of the seas?*'

We may endeavour to explain such errors by the long and memorable delusion that has produced them, but it would be ridiculous to undertake to refute them. The nations upon whom there weighed the cruel tyranny that was already mistress of half the continent, little thought of rising against the tyranny of the right of search. They knew what difference to make between a vexatious proceeding which was exercised upon a few merchant vessels, and the pitiless domination that encroached everywhere, from the government down to private estates. They had already discovered by what means Bonaparte proposed to establish their happiness in spite of themselves. They did not console themselves by saying that it was for their greatest good and with the best intentions that he despoiled

[1] Thiers: *History of the Consulate and the Empire.*

them; in order to detest him as their oppressor, it sufficed to see the contempt, the brutality, and the cynicism, with which international brigandage was openly carried on. Suppose such iniquities did spare us some embarrassment for the present, what did they prepare for us in the future? What sentiments did they give birth to among the nations that we were crushing after having humiliated them? and what implacable hatred would they not leave in the minds of the sovereigns and statesmen so cruelly wounded? The Prince of Machiavel would perhaps have been as merciless towards them, but after having made them his enemies, he would not have suffered them to live. We ought to have carried out his principles, or else not have been his plagiarist. Yes, this policy economised the money of France,—but at what price? At the price of her honour, at the price of her good name for courtesy and generosity, at the price of her popularity among the nations, at the price of the *prestige* which the noble, humane, and disinterested principles of her Revolution had gained for her in the world. The most reckless prodigality would have been less ruinous and less fatal than such an economy. The *Moniteur* denounced every morning 'the infernal genius' of England, and the shameful means that she was employing to create us enemies in Europe. Shameful or not, she had in this respect a system that greatly differed from ours. Our policy consisted in extorting all the money we could from foreign governments; hers in offering them money and in giving it to them. She may be blamed or acquitted for this, but it is impossible that the nations should not in the end be struck with the difference of these two proceedings, and in a way that would not be in our favour.

CHAPTER IX

THE RUSSIAN MEDIATION—AGITATION AGAINST ENGLAND—REORGANISATION OF THE INSTITUTE

THE extraordinary preponderance that France had of late years usurped had caused much alarm to the Powers. Our struggle with England gave them great advantages over us, and Bonaparte appeared to feel the necessity of conciliation. At first he even went so far as to flatter them, especially Prussia and Russia, but his demonstrations had at bottom but one aim, that of drawing them into a league against England; for the fixed idea for which he was to expend so much treasure and so much blood, the absurd and vain idea of striking England by closing the continent to her, that is to say by arming it against ourselves, had already taken so firm a hold on his mind as to disturb its lucidity. At the commencement, knowing the youth, the inexperience, and vanity of Alexander, and his ambition to play an important part, and anxious to gain time to save our navy, he had not hesitated to propose to him the arbitration of the quarrel between France and England, in the hope of gaining him if England did not accept it, and with the intention of deceiving him, as at Ratisbon, if she consented. What justifies this conjecture is, that he offered conditions which he had always hitherto rejected, and which later he would not hear of. He admitted nearly all the points stipulated in Lord Whitworth's ultimatum, the cession of Lampedusa to England, the evacuation of Switzerland and Holland, the indemnity for the king of Piedmont, but he took care to add a clause which he knew England would

never agree to—the immediate cessation of hostilities.[1] This power that had only decided upon war after long hesitation, but which now wished to make it decisive, would not accept arbitration without appeal, and in which she had so many reasons for fearing a snare, but she declared that she was ready to accept a mediation, provided that the negotiation embraced 'all the differences that had given rise to the war between France and England.'

Alexander sincerely desired to maintain the peace of Europe; his ambition as sovereign did not exclude noble and generous passions, that often gave the appearance of Quixotism; he had however sufficient discernment to penetrate the calculation that had inspired the proposal of the First Consul. He moreover clearly saw that while this supreme arbitration was conferred on him, he was considered as having no interest in the question himself, and as a stranger to the quarrels of Europe. Bonaparte had in reality flattered himself that he could neutralise Russia at the price of the vain title of mediating power, and a supremacy tolerated over the Republic of the Seven Isles. This would have been buying the complaisance and services of Alexander at a cheap rate. But it was reckoning too much upon his ingenuousness; and he contrived to frustrate this skilful design of shutting him out of the contest and debarring him from interfering on his own account. If we remember that Russia had never ceased to intercede with us in favour of her clients of Naples, Piedmont, and Germany, that we had always replied by false promises or by objections, we can easily conceive that she had too many common grievances with England to be much irritated at the refusal of this power to submit to an arbitration without appeal, which was only to settle a part of the questions involved in the dispute. Not only did Alexander not break with England as the First Consul had hoped, but he renewed in his own name his former demands, and protested with vivacity against the occupation of Hanover and the fresh expedition against Naples.

Russia was represented at Paris by M. de Markoff, a

[1] Dated June 18, 1803.

haughty and unconciliating diplomatist, but a man of great penetration, devoted to the interests of his country, and who had seen with regret and humiliation the dupery of which his sovereign had been the object at the time of the Germanic mediation. Instead of trying to soften and extenuate the remonstrances with which he was charged, Markoff dilated upon them in the most energetic manner; he felt encouraged by the dissatisfaction of his nation with France, and on several occasions he had not scrupled to say that behind the Czar there were the Russians, an assertion to which the tragic end of Paul I. gave a certain force. Bonaparte's irritation at this attitude of Russia was so much the more violent that he the less expected it from Alexander and the young men who were then his friends and his counsellors. Incapable of concealing his vexation, he attacked Markoff, subjected him to the same insult that Lord Whitworth had experienced, and ended by directly denouncing him to Alexander as 'meddling frequently and in a disagreeable way in the intrigues of the country,'[1] which gave him the right to demand the recall of this 'scoundrel' (*polisson*).[2] In spite of this reciprocal bad humour, Russia continued to offer no longer her arbitration, but her mediation.

Towards the middle of the month of August she submitted to the French Government a general sketch of the concessions that she judged suitable to bring about a reconciliation between the belligerent parties. But the First Consul, who had invoked arbitration, would no longer hear of mediation, and the conditions that he had himself put forward, in the sole end of obtaining a suspension of arms and of gaining Russia, now appeared to him strikingly absurd. He expressed his ideas on this subject in a series of communications, of which the confusion and incoherence betray the disturbance of his mind.[3] He would no longer consent to the concession of Lampedusa, which he had

[1] Bonaparte to Alexander, July 29, 1803.

[2] To Talleyrand, August 23, 1803.

[3] They consist of two letters, followed by two very long memoranda, addressed to Talleyrand, August 23, 1803.

proposed two months before; he refused to treat with England on the affairs of the continent; he was ready to evacuate Holland and Switzerland, but *he would never agree to this clause in an article.* With regard to the indemnities demanded for the king of Sardinia, he would not consent to them, 'unless England gave back Ceylon to Holland, or Trinidad to Spain.' He went so far as to say that he neither threatened nor violated the neutrality of the small states; if his troops had entered them, it was solely 'because England had kept Malta, and violated German independence.'[1] These propositions, the only clear ones amid a torrent of invectives, enable us to judge of the amount of good faith that he brought to the dispute, and the motives that had dictated his demand for arbitration. They put an end to the Russian mediation; but this failure left something more with Alexander than the remembrance of a discomfiture, for he had miscarried on his own account as well as on that of England.

The result was almost the same with Prussia, who had, however, many reasons to be less susceptible than Russia. Instead of being animated by aggressive sentiments against us, this Power had always shown us the most friendly dispositions. Particularly desirous of being agreeable to the First Consul, she had recently given him an unequivocal mark of her good will, by undertaking to negotiate for him a kind of abdication of the House of Bourbon in his favour, for a sum of some millions, a proposition that Louis XVIII. rejected with great nobility and loftiness, and that Bonaparte hastened to disavow as soon as he heard of its failure and the miserable effect it had produced.[2] Prussia had seen with unconcealed satisfaction the blows that we dealt to Austria; she had profited with her already proverbial avidity by the losses that the old Germanic organisation had experienced; and she had long since made neutrality a system from which she hoped sooner or later to

[1] First memorandum.

[2] The negotiation took place through President de Meyer, in February 1803; it was only known to the public the following July, by an article in the *Morning Chronicle.*

reap great advantages. But since our army had invaded Hanover, since we had laid hands upon the port of Cuxhaven, which belonged to the territory of Hamburg, since, as a punishment for some inoffensive demonstrations, we were openly threatening Denmark, one of those maritime states that were supposed to groan the most under the tyranny of the seas, Prussia had begun to lose a little of her security, and gave evident signs of uneasiness.

The blockade that the English had established at the mouths of the Elbe and the Weser, in order to punish the Germanic Confederation for not having defended the neutrality of Hanover, as was its duty to do, the complaints of ruined merchants, the alarm of the small German states, and the remonstrances of discontented Russia, had brought the perplexities of Prussia to their height. It would have been good policy to dispel them. Such a Power, young, active, ambitious, divided between her fears and her cupidity, was for Bonaparte, if he had chosen to conciliate her, the most precious auxiliary in the actual state of Europe. Her neutrality alone sufficed to hold a continental coalition in check. She offered to guarantee not only her own, but that of Germany; in return for her good will, she asked a very small thing, the evacuation of the port of Cuxhaven, which we had just taken from the Hamburgers against all right, and the reduction to the necessary minimum of our army of occupation in Hanover. These very moderate offers of the king of Prussia were brought to the First Consul at Brussels by Lombard, secretary of the Prussian Cabinet, a very decided partisan of our influence, as well as his patron, Count d'Haugwitz. Unfortunately Bonaparte, here as with Russia, would have everything or nothing; he would not accept the neutrality of Prussia, he wanted her alliance and active co-operation in the war. He replied to her advances by a counter-proposition, containing the promise of the cession of Hanover, in exchange for a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive. But however seductive for Prussia the perspective of the acquisition of Hanover may have been, the engagement demanded of her was too unlimited, too absolute, and, above all, too compromising to the in-

terests of every kind which she had to consider, both in Germany and in the rest of Europe, to tempt her prudence or shake her indecision. A considerable party had, moreover, been formed in the country to combat our policy and denounce the danger of French preponderance. She refused our offers, but without ceasing to renew her complaints. Till the end of 1803 she continued to propose the guarantee of Germanic neutrality, in exchange for a complete evacuation of Hanover, and the French Government persisted in their refusal. Thus the only Power that was well disposed towards us in Europe, the one whose position, antecedents, whose interests, rightly or wrongly understood, rendered her in some sort the natural ally of France, was little by little induced to display an indifference and almost hostility towards us, by the exigencies that were as unjust as they were inopportune.

This alarming situation of the continent, so peaceful on the surface, so deeply disturbed below, would seem calculated to cool our conquering zeal. All the elements of a great European coalition were ready, it was only waiting for an occasion to form; the great Powers were jealous and irritated, the small states were trembling before us, while they secretly called for a liberator, and among so many subjects we had not a single ally; if we consider the affair only in the light of success and prudence, there was enough to give rise to doubts upon the seasonableness of an expedition against England, for putting things at the best, and supposing our army disembarked by a miracle on the other side of the strait, it only needed that the English nation should have an idea of prolonging their resistance, as it was natural to fear they would, for France to find herself exposed, and at the mercy of her numerous enemies. These considerations could not escape the penetrating mind of Bonaparte; but he was already too much intoxicated with his omnipotence to appear to draw back after so much boasting. He had returned to Paris on the 15th of August, after a journey which had been one long ovation. He had been hailed everywhere as 'the conqueror of England,' and everywhere he had accepted with his impassible assurance these

somewhat forestalled congratulations. At Antwerp, the president of the General Council of the two Nèthes had saluted him under the name of '*Napoleon the Great*,' a manifestation that we may well believe was not absolutely spontaneous, for the gradation of honours and flattery that it crowned was too skilful to have been inspired by enthusiasm alone. In Rome, the word *maximus* was that which immediately preceded the word *imperator*. It was necessary that this word should have been pronounced, in order that Séguier might say, when complimenting him on his return to Paris: 'The magistrates *are proud to bring to your feet* the tribute of their hearts.'

He who encouraged such words in the bosom of a state still Republican in name, and who was burning with impatience to carry out all the changes that they announced, could not draw back without diminishing the prestige that he cared the most for, that of his force and his military superiority, and consequently without exposing his dearest projects to fresh delays. In order to take this last step towards the supreme power, in order to seize this crown so much coveted, it was requisite that he should have a great success that would permit him to claim such a recompense, or a crisis that would offer him a pretext for invoking the public safety. He accordingly endeavoured to maintain the country in that state of excitement which prepares minds for great events. He hastened the preparations of his 'invincible armada,' concentrated by degrees his vessels in the basins of Boulogne, covered our coasts with cannon to keep the English at a distance, and fanaticised his troops by his words, while he disciplined them by continual exercises.

The *Moniteur* again took up the dispute against England with redoubled hatred and violence. This time it was impossible to be deceived; Bonaparte was not only the inspirer, but more often the author of these insulting manifestoes, which have been partly preserved among his works.

These invectives, of which the tone recalls that of Jacobin polemics—for Bonaparte had too long used this

phraseology ever completely to throw it off—were generally replies to articles extracted from English newspapers, often even they were merely notes at the bottom of the page, but their peremptory and provoking style made a striking dissonance with the constrained diction of the official journal, and betrayed the hand of the master. These curious papers were often enough begun in a tone of moderation and the most edifying impartiality, but very soon the temperament gets the upper hand, and it is seldom that they do not finish with a torrent of abuse. The *Morning Post* having stated in one of its numbers that the English people had never shown so much vigour, unanimity, public spirit, and zeal for the national defence, which is a strictly historical fact, the *Moniteur* hastened to take up this assertion, which could not be to its taste: 'You had, in Europe,' it said, 'the reputation of a wise nation, but you have greatly degenerated. All your speeches inspire contempt and pity upon the Continent. . . . *The whole nation has caught the disease of your king.* Never was a people so rapidly led away by that spirit of infatuation which manifests itself in a nation, when God permits it.' As proof of this state of insanity, he mentioned the blockade of the Elbe and the Weser, which had, according to him, compromised the interests of their *commerce and their manufactures*, of which they no longer understood anything. He then reproaches them, as another sign of their blindness, with their levy *en masse*, 'the most fatal of the extremities to which a nation can be reduced. You threaten us,' he added, 'with Mr. Pitt and Lord Whitworth, whom you have made colonels, and your king on horseback reviews his company in order to impart that warlike zeal and experience which he has acquired in so many combats! . . .'

Whatever may have been the inexperience of the improvised soldiers, it is evident that the levy *en masse* displeased Bonaparte, and for this reason the sarcasm is not felicitous. The situation of Ireland furnished him with a more substantial and a juster argument. The insurrection of Robert Emmet and Thomas Russell, partly prepared and encouraged by the French Government, had just failed miserably in

that unhappy country (in July 1803). The conspirators, forced to act prematurely in consequence of the explosion of a powder magazine, had been dispersed and afterwards arrested after an insignificant struggle; they had only been able to honour their cause by the nobility and firmness of their attitude during the trial that ended in their condemnation. It must be remembered that Pitt had quitted the Ministry, for having attempted, against the will of a bigoted and obstinate king, to release the Irish Catholics from their civil and political disabilities. The insurrection which justified the foresight of the minister had confirmed King George III. in his absurd resistance. The reproach made to the English, then, with regard to Ireland was just, even from the lips of Bonaparte, who had already made several Irelands around him, but he weakened it by the exaggerated language which he employed. Pretending to believe that the Irish had not the free exercise of their religion, because it did not enjoy all the privileges accorded to the Church of England, 'You will know however,' he exclaimed, 'that the most sacred thing among men is conscience, and that man has a secret voice which tells him that *nothing can oblige him to believe what he does not believe.* The most horrible of all tyrannies is that which *forces eighteen-twentieths of a nation to embrace a religion contrary to their belief*, under pain of not being able to exercise their rights of citizens, or to possess any property. . . . They were destitute of all decency, these men who courted the shame of succeeding to the Pitts and the Grenvilles, of accepting conditions imposed by a prince insane and without faith, who in our century *has re-established the laws of Nero and Domitian, and like them has persecuted the Catholic Church!* They did not find this example in your history; your fathers had more virtue and more national respect. What is the fate, then, that *destiny* has prepared for you? It is beyond the knowledge of all human understanding. . . . Heaven only gives nations vicious and mad princes in order to chastise and humble their pride.'[1]

In this long diatribe the General turned author misused

[1] *Moniteur* of the 13th of October 1803.

a fact that was after all honourable for the English nation, and especially for their institutions. King George III. had had at different intervals, during the course of an already long reign, attacks of insanity, from which public affairs had not suffered in the least. At the moment when they were most prosperous or most perplexing the public suddenly learned that the king had had a relapse, and that the strait-jacket was put on, and this produced no excitement,—an evident proof, if ever there was one, that the nation governed themselves, and that the sovereign was not everything. It may be asked, what would have happened in France, if at the same epoch a similar calamity had befallen the First Consul? What price were we not to pay later for the madness much less defined, but much more dangerous, which led him to Moscow? There was then both bad taste and unskilfulness in taking advantage of a circumstance that was glorious for England. It was neither generous nor noble to take up a fact so painful, so independent of all human will, and afflicting even to enemies; but it was the recrimination to which the *Moniteur* reverted most willingly and the most frequently. 'Why are we at war?' it asked about this time, in reply to an English pamphlet; 'because the English people have no one to conduct their affairs but *a mad king* and a prime minister who is like *an old nurse!*'[1]

To these base insults were added the most sinister predictions, and the official journal continually prophesied the ruin and humiliation of England. It announced for her all the convulsions that we had experienced during the revolutionary storm. In their levy *en masse*, it said, the English landlords *have had no other object in view than the preservation of treasures which they think are threatened by the French sans-culottes;* hence the indifference of the English *sans-culottes* in the midst of this pretended national movement, and very soon doubtless their revolt against their masters. These alone figured in the levy of volunteers; the people took good care not to enrol themselves; this

[1] See, among others, the *Moniteur* of the 10th, 20th, and 22d of November 1803.

show army would soon be conquered: 'if Cæsar's legions aim at their faces, these fine troops will soon only think of their individual safety.' These encouraging prophecies were confirmed by notes which were supposed to come from travellers or French prisoners detained in England depicting the revolt of the poor against the rich as imminent in the country. Now that the poor were armed, this social war had become inevitable.[1]

These predictions were soon followed by omens. The First Consul having returned to Boulogne towards the beginning of the month of November, the *Moniteur* gravely printed the following correspondence a few days after his departure:

'It has been remarked *as an omen*, that in excavating here *for the encampment of the First Consul*, an axe has been found which appears to have belonged to the Roman army that invaded England.' The fact was singular; but, after all, there was nothing in it but what was perfectly possible. A similar event, however, took place at the same time at Ambleteuse, and here again it was on the occasion of the First Consul's encampment: 'There have also been found,' added the note, 'at Ambleteuse, in digging *to put up the First Consul's tent*, some medals of William the Conqueror. It must be owned that these circumstances are *at least strange*, and they appear still more singular if we remember that when Bonaparte visited the ruins of Pelusium in Egypt, he there found a cameo of Julius Cæsar.'[2]

And all these marvellous stories were dated from Boulogne, the eighteenth Brumaire! We see by this, that if Bonaparte believed in fatalism, he also possessed the art of making it subservient to his ends, and knew when occasion required how to make Destiny speak. The correspondent of the *Moniteur* displayed his moderation by not adding that these medals of William were commemorative of conquest. With regard to the cameo of Pelusium, the truth had been slightly embellished. In the first place, it was not of Cæsar but of Augustus; and in the next, it was not

[1] *Moniteur* of November 2d, 1803.
[2] *Moniteur* of November 12th.

found by Bonaparte, but by a savant who belonged to the expedition; there was nothing therefore miraculous in it. When we examine closely by what miserable means a man succeeds in getting a hold on imaginations, in causing a belief in his star, and in obtaining the appellation of 'the man of destiny,' we conceive a contempt for humanity, and scarcely know which is most to be despised, he who lowers himself to such pitiful imposture, or they who can be its dupes.

Amongst all the means calculated to excite the imagination of men there only remained one that had not been employed, this was poetry: that inspiration from heaven like the oracles, but which it was much more difficult to cause to speak. It had been Bonaparte's particular despair that he had never been able to find a great poet to sing his exploits, and awaken on occasion the warlike spirit of the people. His taste for art and literature is very questionable, for his passion even for Ossian was nothing more than an affectation assumed at an epoch in which he was playing the hero of disinterestedness; but he felt that therein lay a great power, and as such he wished to utilise poetry. He would willingly have enrolled in his army a cohort of poets, who would have been something like drummers of a superior order. But fortune always refused him this favour; he was astonished at being only able to inspire Tyrtæi of low degree, and often bitterly complained of this injustice of fate. It never occurred to him that money and high places were not sufficient attractions for the creation of *chefs-d'œuvre*. He, however, experienced the inefficiency of this method early enough to change his ideas on the subject. On the renewal of the war with England an appeal was made to all available rhymesters, and rewards were promised to those who should distinguish themselves the most in this competition of insult and imprecation against England. But the result did not answer the First Consul's expectations. It is difficult to imagine anything more insipid, dull, or lamentable than these pieces written under the eye of a tutelary police. The official journal published a series of these poems about the same time that it announced the exhibition of the tapestry of Bayeux, and

commented after its fashion upon that illustration of the exploits of William. These poems were so poor and doleful that, if the public had read them, they were enough to put them out of conceit with the passions they were intended to inspire. Lebrun-Pindar led the way by a *national ode*, a most grotesque composition, in which he depicted all the rivers of the earth, exasperated by the proceedings of the Thames, coming to cry for vengeance against it at the tribunal of Neptune. The principal piece was a discourse of the Seine, in which the Thames, its perfidy and its arrogance, were rated at their value, and denounced to the indignation of the human race. The piece terminated by a prediction, in which the city of London was very ill treated :

> ' Tremble, nouvelle Tyr, un nouvel Alexandre,
> Sur l'onde où tu régnais va disperser ta cendre,
> Ton nom même n'est plus !'[1]

Lebrun, who had already a pension as *poeta Cesareo*, was paid three thousand francs for this ode. Better verses might be expected for that price.

There was afterwards the '*poésie sur la Descente*,' by Crouzet, another versifier of the time,[2] and a multitude of other lucubrations of the noble style, the monotony of which was sometimes enlivened by humorous pieces, in order that there might be something for all tastes. But paid gaiety was even more dismal than enthusiasm to order ; it was quite lugubrious. In no literature shall we find so nauseous and detestable a work as the humorous poem, in four cantos, upon the *Goddams*, by a *French dog*, and occupying *ten columns in the Moniteur*, whose object was to have the laugh on our side, and gain us the sympathy of European wags.[3] Such productions were scarcely more calculated to stimulate the warlike humour of the nation, than to ensure to him who paid for them the traditional title of protector of learning. Learning was at that time too much protected, and it is exactly that which

[1] *Moniteur* of the 30th of August.
[2] *Moniteur* of the 25th of December.
[3] *Moniteur* of the 26th of December.

destroyed it. If it happened by a sort of miracle that some spontaneous work was produced, however miserable, outside the limits of official inspiration, there was instantly a cry of alarm and suspicion, and the unfortunate author was pointed out and threatened, as if he had encroached upon the most sacred rights of the State. An unknown individual having written, without being paid for it, which appeared extremely suspicious, a few stanzas entitled *Invitation à partir pour l'Angleterre*, Bonaparte immediately wrote to the Chief Judge Régnier:

'*It is advisable to know who is the author of this song; although it appears written with praiseworthy intentions, the police ought not to be unacquainted with any movement.*'[1] Unacquainted with any movement! What, not even the movement of a rhymester composing a song? Thus the police were, in this golden age of the Consulate, the forced collaborators of authors, and we seek the cause of the decay and nullity of this literature! There has never been a great literary epoch without perfect independence of mind. It could be shown that even under Louis XIV., at least during the period of his ascending fortune, authors wrote according to their manner of thinking and feeling, and that letters began to decline as soon as this liberty failed them. Every *régime* of compression necessarily leads to a reign of convention, of declamation, and of falsehood. Inspiration gives place to rhetoric, and publicity no longer exists except for sophists whose eloquence consists in the arrangement of words. The evil is still more perceptible in a philosophical epoch, that is to say, in one which less than any other can dispense with liberty of thought. For it such a *régime* is equivalent to complete annihilation. In letters and philosophy, as in religion, Bonaparte never recognised anything else than a dependency and an instrument of administration. For this reason he never had other than a police literature.

At the same time that encouragements were lavished on a venal press and mercenary writers, the glorious men who

[1] Note from Bonaparte addressed to the Grand Juge, October 14th, 1803.

were to remain the sole honour of this unfortunate period met with nothing but persecution. Napoleon often repeated after his fall, that if Corneille had lived in his time he should have made him a prince; as long as his reign lasted only insults and orders of exile fell to the lot of those who displayed in their writings any spark of this noble and lofty genius. Chateaubriand had showered adulation upon 'the restorer of the altars,' and consequently had done nothing to deserve his hatred; Bonaparte thought he was amply rewarding him by employing his talents in a subordinate post at the Court of Rome. But Benjamin Constant, Daunou, and Chénier had been driven from the tribunate, and could no longer either write or speak. Madame de Staël had just suffered an exile of two years for some trifling remarks. Hoping to remain forgotten by dint of prudence and moderation, she secretly returned to France, and took refuge, not at Paris, but in the country ten leagues off, with one of her friends, near Beaumont-sur-Oise. She had only been there a month when she received a brutal order to quit: 'Inform her,' wrote Bonaparte to Régnier, 'that if at the end of five days she is still there, she will be conducted to the frontier by the gendarmery. The arrival of this woman, like that of *a bird of bad omen*, has always been the signal of some trouble. It is my intention that she shall not remain in France.'[1]

This is the way in which the man who was later to be the feeling philanthropist of Saint Helena thought he had a right to treat a woman of genius, whose name will live as long as our language, and whose only crime was to love liberty and to possess a high soul. On the other hand, he pensioned Madame de Genlis, whose very ordinary mind, early formed in the habits of the higher kind of domestic, had only flattery for him. Measures of a more general character completed the effect of these severities by giving them the extent of a system.

Individual persecutions may relax, but an institution lasts; the most striking of these measures was the *reorganisation* of the Institute. We have already seen what Bonaparte

[1] Bonaparte to Régnier, October 3d, 1803.

understood by reorganisation; it was with this word, sometimes replaced by that of purging, that he had destroyed every shadow of independence and vitality in the State. The reorganisation of the Institute had no other end than the suppression of the class of *moral and political science*, the last refuge of what he called ideology, that is to say, free discussion applied to an order of ideas that were odious to him. *Moral and political?* What did this ill-sounding expression mean? That politics had something to do with morality? And by this word *science?* that it acknowledged *principles*, that is to say, rights and duties; that there were eternal truths beyond the facts, and above the reach, of brutal force? It was urgent not to allow such dangerous errors any longer to gain credence, and to dispense this kind of philosophical tribunate. This factious class was accordingly suppressed, and only four classes were left in the Institute, comprising the different positive sciences, the fine arts, literature, and, lastly, history, the suspicious science that had been banished from instruction, and that was not totally proscribed out of a mistaken respect for the prejudices of the century. The members of the Institute received a salary of fifteen hundred francs, a sum that would seem to be given less with a view to providing for them than to remind them of their relative value to the State. The creation of the *senatoreries* had added from twenty-five to thirty thousand francs to the salaries of the Senators. There was enough in this simple comparison to penetrate the literary men and savants with a sense of the modesty of their office.

Forty members represented the old French Academy in the new Institute. It is surprising that Bonaparte, who borrowed so much from the ancient *régime*, did not dream of the re-establishment, pure and simple, of the Academy itself. This institution had never, in fact, shown itself the enemy of despotism. Formed by the monarchy and for the monarchy, eminently favourable to a spirit of intrigue, of vanity, and of court flattery, devoid of seriousness and high ambition, incapable of a collective and continuous task, a stranger to the great works pursued in common, which so

gloriously justify the existence of scientific corporations, occupied exclusively with futilities which it has the art of ennobling, fatal to emulation, which it pretends to develop, by the compromises and calculations that it imposes, influenced in everything by petty considerations, and wasting all its activity in those puerile tournaments where flattery for others is only the anticipated remuneration of compliments for one's self, the French Academy seems to have received from its founders the special mission to transform genius into *bel esprit*, and it would be difficult to name a talent that it has not diminished. It has always had something of that senate that Sieyès dreamed of: if by chance it crowns a man of genius it is to *absorb him;* as soon as it takes possession of him, it enervates him, lulls him, and stifles him. Drawn in spite of itself into politics, it alternately seeks and eschews them, but it especially delights in gossip, and when it goes so far as to venture on opposition, it is as the zealous guardian of old prejudices. If we examine its influence upon the national mind, we recognise that it has given it a flexibility, a brilliancy, and a polish that it did not before possess, but it has been at the expense of its strong and manly qualities, at the expense of its fresh originality, of its impulsive vivacity, its vigour, its frankness and fearlessness, and its ingenuous graces. The Academy has disciplined it, but it has weakened, impoverished it, and given it a stamp of immobility. The ideal of the Academy is charm, and it would willingly make literature a dependence of the art of pleasing. It regards taste not as the sentiment of the beautiful, but a certain type of correctness, which is only an elegant form of mediocrity. It has substituted pomp for grandeur, the artificial methods of rhetoric for inspiration, refinement for simplicity, studied for natural elegance, the dulness and monotony of literary orthodoxy for variety, that source of intellectual renovation; and in the works produced under its inspiration we discover the orator or the writer, but never the man.

By its spirit, by its traditions, by all its historical precedents, the French Academy was made to be the natural ornament of a grand monarchical society, and the indis-

pensable complement of its institutions. Richelieu had conceived and created it as a sort of higher centralisation applied to the intellect, as a kind of superior literary court, destined to maintain intellectual unity and punish innovations; it had justified his expectations by condemning the heresies of the *Cid*, and it had ever since remained the personification of a State literature. For all these reasons the Academy had, at different times, attracted the attention of Bonaparte, who was more capable than any other of appreciating the advantages of a supreme body of mandarins in every well-organised despotism. He had been on the point of restoring to it its ancient privileges, but the Forty had one thing against them that the First Consul detested as much as liberty,—this was *esprit*. The cavilling temper, the charming amiable disposition of the French nation, had had their most brilliant representatives in the Academy during the eighteenth century, and the ancient *régime*, however distrustful it may have been, had not only allowed it to exist, but had loaded it with favours and benefits. Our kings by the grace of God knew at least how to take a joke, and had not the uneasy susceptibility of usurpers. Bonaparte, who could not endure wit, that eternal sceptic, the born enemy of false grandeur, the foe of charlatanism, and who persecuted it even in the inoffensive meetings in the salons of Paris, took care not to restore to it the kind of court in which it had reigned with so much splendour. The Academy, reduced to the modest office of a class of the Institute, but possessing neither the utility of its new condition nor the *prestige*, authority, and attraction of its former situation, was able to live in a mysterious retirement, regretting its ancient honours, but without venturing to have recourse to the consolation which generally enables it to bear its disgrace with perfect philosophy—the consolation of epigram.

The reorganisation of the Institute was speedily followed by another reorganisation, that might have been considered complete after all the changes that had already been introduced in the prerogatives of the public assemblies; but it seems that in this respect nothing could satisfy Bonaparte

till from reorganisation to reorganisation he had totally annihilated them. The purging of the tribunate would appear to have exhausted the measure of improvements destined to annul the Legislative Body. It was not so, however. The 7th of January, on the opening of the Session of 1804, the Government gave notice to this assembly of an organic Senatus Consultum, the object of which was, they said, to confer on it all the splendour and importance that were due to its high mission. The First Consul wished henceforth to place himself in direct communication with the representatives of the nation; the Senatus Consultum decreed that he would open the legislative sessions in person with great state; he would appear surrounded by twelve senators, and would for that day place his governor of the palace and his consular guard at the disposal of the Assembly. These immense concessions, which the Government announced as destined to open a new era, were accompanied with some minor provisions, which clearly indicated their meaning and end. The First Consul wished to do the Legislative Body the honour of himself electing their president from a list of five candidates; he carried his good intentions so far as to desire also to name the quæstors; in short, he filled up the measure of his favours by deciding 'that when the Government sent any communication to the Legislative Body, they might deliberate on their reply in a secret committee.' In order that there might be no mistake with regard to this clause, Treilhard took care to explain: 'You will be able,' he said, 'to offer the Government *that has consulted you* (that is to say, when it has consulted you!), the full tribute of your opinion and experience.' He then endeavoured to point out all the advantages of the nomination of the president by the First Consul: 'This nomination would be more solemn, the functions of the president more lasting, his dignity more imposing.' Boissy d'Anglas thanked the Government for so many favours, though his colleagues were not in reality very much charmed by them; but the clearest result of these fine speeches was the nomination of Fontanes, who was by no means agreeable to the majority of the Legislative Body, and had only had 88 out of 239

votes. The new president hastened to testify his gratitude by hailing the advent of better times for our public assemblies: 'Liberty,' he exclaimed, in a kind of transport, 'returns to the national assemblies under the auspices of reason and experience.'[1]

This measure was preliminary to the complete suppression of the tribunate, which was as yet only planned. Bonaparte explained himself very categorically on this in the Council of State. The tribunate, if not dangerous, was only a useless machinery; it ought to be united to the Legislative Body, which would itself only have to vote the taxes and civil laws. They had nothing to do with politics, the Government being the only real representative of the nation. The Senate fully sufficed for the surplus of legislative work. Sessions of a month or six weeks at the most were all that the Legislative Body required.[2]

He thus went on completing this terrible simplification of despotism, which destroys everything around it, without perceiving that he was isolating himself and ruining his own supports. Another Senatus Consultum had just simplified justice, by suspending the jury in eight departments, according to the power created by the famous law on special tribunals. The chief judge intimated, in a speech before the Court of Cassation, that this measure would sooner or later be generalised and extended to the whole of France; Muraire presented at the same time a list of improvements to introduce into the legislation, and condemned in no measured terms the indulgence that the jury had thought right to show on certain occasions: 'The criminal tribunals have,' he said, 'unexpectedly acquitted some very guilty persons; but the blame *rests upon the pusillanimity, the ignorance and prevarication of the jury.*'[3]

What can be thought of the guarantees of the independence of a judiciary which the Government could treat in so ignominous a way? The acquittals which had so excited the displeasure of the First Consul had mostly been pro-

[1] *Archives Parlementaires:* Sitting of January 12, 1804.
[2] Thibaudeau: *Mémoires d'un Conseiller d'Etat.*
[3] *Moniteur* of the 28th of September 1803.

nounced for offences in affairs of conscription. The indulgence appeared to him a direct and flagrant conspiracy against his power. The conscription was, in fact, the great spring of his government: '*Recruiting*,' he wrote to Berthier, in 1802, '*is the first and great business of the State.*'[1] He henceforth made it the principal object of his attention. The laws already so severe upon the conscription appeared to him indulgent even to the verge of weakness; he endeavoured to lessen the reasons for exemption from service, and rendered almost illusory the one that had hitherto been drawn from want of height. He created companies of light infantry, composed entirely of men of short stature, by which means he soon doubled the numbers furnished by the conscription. He wished the conscription for the navy to begin at the age of ten or twelve years, and that men should be bound for life to this service;[2] but the number of men required for his land forces soon made him lose sight of his plans for the navy. As the prefects did not succeed in making the nation appreciate the benefits of the conscription, the bishops were called upon to aid them with their charges, and very soon a Consular decree increased the penalties that were already dealt to refractory conscripts.[3] The sentence of death was pronounced upon every deserter found guilty of having carried away his arms. The other punishments were the chain and ball, penal servitude, and a fine in every case.

The gigantic enterprise, however, which served as the motive or pretext for most of these measures advanced more slowly than had been expected. A first, and still only partial, assemblage of the flotilla at Boulogne had been effected successfully, owing to the batteries that lined our coasts; the flat-bottomed boats, requiring only shallow water, had been able to execute their manœuvres without difficulty, by running along the shore beyond the reach of the English cannon. Nevertheless, this simple experiment, and the petty skirmishes which had taken place with the enemy's vessels, had discovered in the organisation of the

[1] Bonaparte to Berthier, December 13, 1802.
[2] Thibaudeau. [3] *Moniteur* of November 25, 1803.

flotilla a number of inconveniences, which naval men themselves had not hitherto suspected, and which were calculated to make them dread those which would be revealed in crossing in the open sea; unfortunately, they could not know these latter till it would be too late to remedy them. It was necessary to alter the stowage, to change not only the calibre of the cannon, but their carriages and their disposition in the vessels, to put away a portion of the flat-bottomed boats that were disabled before they had been used, in order to procure others. The First Consul, who had spent more than half the month of November at Boulogne, inspecting everything, regulating everything, even to the number of shouts that the sailors and soldiers were to give in his honour, ordaining that they should shout 'three times, *Vive le Premier Consul!*' which was a sure way of having enthusiasm,[1] was not slow in recognising the necessity of a postponement. He now began to understand the insufficiency of the flotilla when reduced to its own strength, and decided on insuring the co-operation of our squadrons; but we see by a letter to Ganteaume,[2] and by the various combinations that he submitted to him, that his ideas with regard to the manner in which this co-operation was to be exercised were extremely vague. He named the end of February as the time when our fleets from Toulon, from Brest, and from Rochefort, could set sail to join the flotilla; but the date was evidently premature, and he could not reasonably hope to be ready to attempt this great venture before the end of the spring. The junction of the squadrons from Toulon and Rochefort was to take place either at Cadiz, Lisbon, or at Toulon itself; they were to pass safely before Brest, under the eyes of Cornwallis, who was obliged to keep near the coast in order to blockade this port, and from hence to proceed to Boulogne. But for this plan to succeed, it was necessary to suppose Nelson deceived by false demonstrations and sailing for Egypt; it was necessary, too, to escape the vigilance of the British cruisers, which were observing the coasts of France and

[1] Bonaparte to Decrès, January 1, 1804.
[2] Bonaparte to Ganteaume, December 7, 1803.

Spain. It was only towards the end of December, apparently, that Bonaparte began to see the possibility of a general rendezvous of our fleets in the West Indies, to return from thence to Boulogne, and this idea was probably suggested to his counsellors by the necessity of succouring Martinique; it is at least at that time, that is to say the 29th of December 1803, that Ganteaume received orders to sail for Martinique to disembark reinforcements upon the island.[1] The junction at this distance was not only far less perilous, but better calculated to deceive the enemy, baffle his pursuit, and give us over his divided forces the superiority that results from unity and clearly-defined aim.

[1] Bonaparte to Ganteaume, December 29, 1803.

CHAPTER X

CONSPIRACY OF GEORGES AND PICHEGRU—MURDER OF THE DUC D'ENGHIEN—DEATH OF PICHEGRU

In spite of all his efforts to excite public opinion, the First Consul had to experience an inevitable delay. His plans of political transformation, naturally subordinate to his military projects, did not encounter any direct opposition, but they lacked that maturity which was necessary to give birth to an occasion for carrying them out; the force, or rather the inertia of things thwarted them. After the first few moments of a somewhat artificial enthusiasm, the nation gradually relapsed into apathy; the expedition to England got on but slowly, and showed signs of new postponements; Europe, uneasy and hostile, watched our movements, and was ready to profit by our faults. This situation was not encouraging; it gave men leisure and quiet for reflection; above all, it offered no pretext that would justify the fresh usurpation that Bonaparte was impatient to accomplish. In order to claim the crown so long the object of his ambition, he required either the prestige of great success or the excuse of a great internal commotion. Both were wanting; the delay to which he was condemned could not be otherwise than prejudicial to him, for by the single fact that his fortune had ceased to increase it had a tendency to decrease. It was at this critical moment that his combinations, marvellously assisted by the imprudence and folly of his enemies, gave rise to the pretext of which he stood in need.

It may be fearlessly affirmed that no epoch of our history has been more completely and more daringly falsified than that of the conspiracy of Georges, the tragic end of Pichegru

and of the Duc d'Enghien, and the trial of Moreau. Never have blacker plots been enveloped in thicker clouds; and this fact is easily explained when we think of the interest that so many powerful persons had in extenuating their conduct, in hiding their intentions, and in obliterating all trace of their acts. When we reflect on the facilities that they had for destroying proofs which would tell against them, on the forced silence of the press, on the absence of all control and all publicity, on the terror that hung over the public, we are surprised that so many elements of information have been allowed to survive. It is notorious that our archives have at different times been ransacked by interested parties, that certain deeds have been suppressed, others forged, so that we can only judge the guilty by such documents as they have chosen to leave us, and by such as have escaped their notice. A part even of these documents are withheld from us, for the State, which is the guardian of the unpublished portion, regards itself as the master and dispenser of historical truth; however, it is not likely that in this case the interdiction is much to be regretted, at least as far as Bonaparte is concerned. The man who caused all the papers relative to the battle of Marengo to be abstracted from the archives in order to substitute an imaginary bulletin drawn up many years after the event, would not have left many proofs of affairs that were infinitely less glorious for himself.

To all these causes of obscurity may be added the lies artfully invented to deceive posterity. These fictions have been in some sort sanctioned by a long and general assent; they form part of the Napoleonic legend; they have been eagerly accepted by that unexampled infatuation which no falsehood however gross seemed formerly able to disgust or cure, and which we now see dying of satiety. In the first rank of these inventions we must place the various stories that were fabricated at St. Helena, under the inspiration of Napoleon, and the *Mémoires* of Savary, duke of Rovigo. Some of our most accredited historians seem too often to have had no other object than that of developing the theme with which this double tradition has furnished them. It is

certain that no evidence should be rejected till after a serious examination, even though it be full of obvious and palpable mis-statements; the accounts from St. Helena ought not therefore to be absolutely set aside, for they contain admissions that are useful to collect, and their artifice itself reveals the character of the man who conceived them.

Their perfect harmony in falsehood as in truth is, moreover, an incontestable proof that they emanate from the principal actor, and deserve to be discussed as his testimony of himself. But beyond systems arranged afterwards, there are fortunately a certain number of facts of unimpeachable truth; it suffices to prove these, and to state them clearly, in order to overthrow that elaborate work; they cannot of course completely enlighten us, they are, however, sufficiently conclusive to restore to the events their general character and true signification. The first duty of a good critic is only to admit proved facts; but by clearing the elucidated points it often happens that he throws a new light upon those that had hitherto been doubtful. History then becomes like an inscription, in which some characters were wanting, that an experienced eye can fill up.

The numerous enemies of the Consular Government had been by turns disconcerted by the splendour of its success, and struck with stupor by its rapid and violent steps; the rupture with England restored them to hope. But this feeling, checked in Paris by the evident impossibility of resistance, where men were reduced to wait instead of acting, soon rose to a pitch of intoxication among the adversaries of the Government in foreign countries, particularly among the emigrants who were residing in England. At home, the chiefs of the opposition, both military and civil, Moreau, Bernadotte, Carnot, Lafayette, the glorious proscripts of the tribunate, were too clear-sighted to hope for anything from a nation that was indifferent and resigned; but they believed that in the long run good might come out of the excess of evil; and the safest course appeared to them to leave this power to ruin itself by the insufferable insolence of its proceedings and the blind temerity of its policy. Abroad,

owing to that optical illusion which prevents exiles from seeing clearly, and makes them easily believe what they wish, all difficulties were marvellously simplified. Carried away by the warlike movement that they saw around them, the emigrants who were living in England readily considered it as irresistible; they forgot the strength of their terrible adversary, ridiculously exaggerated his embarrassment, predicted his speedy downfall, and demanded immediate action. The Count d'Artois, a light and frivolous character, as narrow-minded as he was shallow, kept up their chimeras and shared their impatience. He had round him several princes of his family, the Duc de Berri, the Prince de Condé, and beside them men whose devotion, energy, and intelligence, deserved a better employment,—passionate and adventurous gentlemen, who had remained faithful to the Royalist cause in spite of the seductions of Bonaparte, such as MM. de Polignac, de Rivière, de Vioménil, de Durfort, de Vaudreuil; ancient servitors like Bertrand de Molleville, the Count d'Escars, the Bishop of Arras; courageous partisans of an iron stamp like Georges Cadoudal; and the strayed remnants of our revolutionary storms, such as Villot, Dumourier, and Pichegru. All these men, divided by opinion and even by interests, united only by a common hatred and the desire to return to their country, beset with their counsels and their plans the English Cabinet, who were unfortunately interested in encouraging them, in order to create a division in France.

In Germany there was another centre of emigrants, of whom the Count de Provence was the soul; but this prince, who had much more penetration than his brother, and united a fund of sceptical resignation to an appearance of the most serene and imperturbable confidence, that formed a singular mixture of nobleness and puerility, had several times blamed the imprudence of a policy which had hitherto only resulted in the disaster of Quiberon and the extermination of La Vendée. He looked for deliverance to more general causes, the awakening of public opinion, the faults of the First Consul, the quiet but continuous efforts of European diplomacy to reconstruct a great coalition. He

kept up communications with a committee in Paris; but this cautious committee, who made observations without noise, and wrote much more than they acted, were rather agents of information than conspirators. Political disagreements, already plainly seen between the two brothers, increased this difference of views upon the line of conduct to adopt in the struggle against Bonaparte. The Count de Provence had, as to the new character of royalty and as to the concessions to make to the principles and interests of the Revolution, very different ideas from those of the Count d'Artois, who on this subject had kept to the manifesto of Brunswick. But for this reason alone all the active and passionate emigrants had rallied round the Count d'Artois, for the first thing needed for fighting is passion.

Various plans had one after another been debated and rejected in the councils of the Count d'Artois. Sad and bitter lessons had quite recently shown the uselessness of a movement in La Vendée, even supposing it had been possible to raise an insurrection in that exhausted province. The revolt might be sustained for some time at the price of heroic efforts, but it would of necessity be circumscribed, and would have no influence upon the neighbouring provinces. On the other hand, the services of the emigrants as an auxiliary corps in foreign armies were still more inefficacious, and they greatly exaggerated its importance. Numerous desertions had increased this numeric inferiority, which rendered their influence upon the fate of a battle almost insignificant. It was, moreover, exposing themselves to long postponements to wait for deliverance from the decisions of war; they therefore determined upon expedients more fit to satisfy men who were impatient to act. It was not at the extremities but at the centre that they must hit this power, which had absorbed everything around it, if they would strike it surely. They knew that in the army there were a great many discontented generals, some from personal motives, because despotism always ends by wounding those whom it has the most interest in conciliating, others because they disapproved of the steps of the Government. It was necessary first of all to insure

the concurrence of these men of action, whose example would sooner or later draw after them the more timid opponents that were hidden everywhere, even in the bosom of the Senate. With the support of these generals and the means of which it was believed they could dispose, the emigrants flattered themselves that they could organise a movement in Paris itself to overthrow the Consular Government. Such was the first form of this famous plan, which immediately obtained the approbation of the English Cabinet.

The plan had many defects; but the gravest of all was, that it was a suggestion of the French police. This fact, sometimes suspected, most often denied, is officially stated in a work printed and published in April 1804, by the French Government itself, under the title of *Alliance entre les Jacobins français et les Ministres anglais.* This libel was the work of the famous Méhée de la Touche, an old Septembriseur, who, deported as a Jacobin at the time of the attempt of Nivôse, afterwards escaped from the island of Oleron, and took refuge in England, where he contrived to get paid at the same time as an agent of the Royalist cause and as a spy of the Consular police. Méhée related in it his connection with the emigrants, while he boasts of his infamy. A refugee in England since the month of December 1802, received by the minister Pelham and by Bertrand de Molleville, he had submitted to them a memorial, in which he proved that Bonaparte could only be overthrown by a coalition between the emigrants and the republicans of France; he gave the conditions of this alliance and the means of insurrection that ought to be employed. His plan was not wholly adopted, but it became the leading idea of the Royalist plan; Méhée was rewarded, and, thanks to him and to other agents in London, the French police were fully acquainted with all that took place in the councils of the emigrants.

The indispensable preliminary of these ambitious projects was the adhesion of General Moreau to the views of the emigrants. Of all the malcontents, Moreau was not only the most illustrious, the most esteemed and the most

popular, but he was the only one whose example could entice into so hazardous an enterprise generals who were distinguished, but who could do nothing without him, such as Bernadotte, Macdonald, Souham, Delmas, and others, whose dispositions were known. They thought they had found a sure means of gaining his association in the plot of General Pichegru, who had been his protector and his friend. This strange man, who remains one of the most enigmatical characters of history, had taken refuge in London, after his miraculous escape from Cayenne, where he had been transported with the victims of Fructidor. Excluded by Bonaparte from the reparative measure which had opened France to the few survivors of that proscription, Pichegru, after long misfortunes and innumerable trials which would have overwhelmed a weaker mind, at length found himself among the men for whom he had descended from the rank of a patriot general to that of a fugitive. He began a second expiation which was to be still sadder than the first. To what precise motives, to what secret suggestions had he yielded in the beginning, when he exchanged his title of first soldier of the Republic for the equivocal assurances of the subtle agent of Condé? How far had he deceived himself? To what extent was he influenced by ambition, corruption, discouragement, the errors of a mistaken patriotism? These are mysteries which will probably never be solved; and it is not the smallest chastisement for these dark plots that they can always be attributed without improbability to the lowest and most perverse motives, even though they have been sometimes inspired by sincere scruples. The fear alone of such a confusion ought to be enough to make a man of honour shrink from engaging in them, for here the doubt itself is a condemnation. As far as Pichegru is concerned, doubt would be an excess of indulgence, and his memory cannot invoke the benefit of it, because there were things in his conduct which no intention can justify. He possessed great qualities, recognised by his enemies themselves; he united a rare coolness to energy of character; he had the steadiness and will of a profound character; whatever may

be said of his venality, he remained poor after having conquered Holland, and the simplicity of his tastes and habits does not permit us to attribute his defection to base cupidity; but when this is admitted, it still remains to be explained how the *protégé* and the confidant of St. Just, the favourite general of the terrorist democracy, became the instrument of Condé almost without transition, and upon the first sign that the crafty Fauche Borel made him. The suddenness of this conversion would of itself be an indelible blot, for there is a certain fidelity that a man owes to himself, independent of that which he owes to principles; but how can the long hypocrisy that it imposed on him be justified? There was no doubt a great lassitude in men's minds at that epoch, and the revolution had been polluted by such excesses that people began to lose faith in it; but suppose that these disappointments had had more to do with Pichegru's determination than the promises by which they endeavoured to stimulate his ambition, he still held his commission from a government that he was betraying; he was still soldier of a cause which he was deserting while he pretended to serve it. Sincerity of intentions is of no avail here, and honour as well as conscience justly protests against the ignominy of such a position.

Moreau had the first proofs of Pichegru's connections with the Prince de Condé: he abstained for some time from divulging them, believing that Pichegru was no longer dangerous since he had lost his command, feeling a repugnance for the office of informer, and restrained moreover by the remembrance of an old friendship. But at the time of the *coup-d'état* of Fructidor, recognising that the secret could no longer be kept because his principal officers had all read this correspondence, he did not denounce Pichegru to the Directory, as has often been stated, but he sent the papers that had been seized to the director Barthélemy, whom he knew to be favourable to the general, leaving him to make such use of them as he judged suitable. Barthélemy had himself been arrested, the papers had fallen into the hands of his colleagues, and Moreau had expiated by a long disgrace, nobly borne, the error of a

hesitation which was founded upon a principle that did him honour. Although the charges which he had produced against Pichegru only supplied a superfluous addition to those with which Bonaparte had already furnished the Directory in order to ruin that general, his kind and generous heart reproached him for the part he had involuntarily played in this sad affair, for many innocent men had been involved in Pichegru's crime. The misfortunes of this general, the remembrances of services rendered, of dangers shared, and of so many glorious labours borne together, the amnesty since extended to so many persons less worthy of interest than the conqueror of Holland, made Moreau wish to see the exile, if not restored to his former honours, at least offered a refuge in the country that he had saved.

His feelings being known in London, they immediately thought of making use of them, in order to effect between the two generals a reconciliation that would in itself promptly lead to a more complete understanding. They knew that Moreau was discontented, and much opposed to the Consular *régime;* from this they concluded that he was ready to join in a Royalist conspiracy, and intermediaries, interested in maintaining their own importance, or dupes of their own credulity, did nothing to correct the mistake. They were in reality gravely deceiving themselves in attributing such dispositions to Moreau, whose opinions had not changed since the commencement of the Revolution. He had remained the patriot of '89 and the volunteer of '92. Blinded by his rancour towards the Directory, he had, like many upright men, given an inconsiderate co-operation to the 18th Brumaire, but he had quickly recognised and deplored his error, and after his admirable campaign of Hohenlinden he lived in almost absolute retirement, notwithstanding all the interest that he had in conciliating the First Consul, and although he well knew that his living in private was regarded as a crime. Instead of dreaming of a restoration, the institutions that he had most blamed in the new *régime* were precisely those which resembled the old, such as the Concordat and the Legion

of Honour. We may on this point refer to the testimony of those who have done the most to blacken his memory; his enemy Savary formally asserts that Moreau 'was a sincere republican, and disliked the Vendeans.'[1] Desmarest, one of the directors of the Consular police, bears witness[2] to the same thing with still more force: 'Moreau,' he says, 'had no inclination to play the part of Monk. . . . His bad humour and his hatred were far from amounting to a resolution to overthrow the Government, and still farther from the action itself.' But upon this subject we may quote the opinion of a man most worthy in every respect to enlighten the judgment of the historian. Lafayette relates,[3] that when he broke his thigh, in the month of March 1803, he received the most touching marks of attention from General Moreau, who sent almost every day to inquire for him. He had, at this time, several interviews with him, and particularly a conversation in which all the chances of the future were discussed. Moreau spoke plainly about Bonaparte's tyranny; then, after having taken a review of the different parties, 'The Bourbons,' he said, 'have made themselves too despicable to be feared;' and he added, by way of conclusion, 'In any case, you and I are very sure to be found working together, *for I have always thought of and wished the same things as you.*'

These words were the exact expression of the political opinions of Moreau, as of all the sound portion of the nation. In spite of the reserve which he imposed upon himself, his sentiments were well known at the Consular Court; and they had not a little contributed to inflame the hatred that Bonaparte had vowed to him since his great military success of the year 1800. The First Consul detested him, not so much because he was his rival in glory as because he was his designated successor,—the only man who was considered as the possible head of the Government in case of anything happening to himself. Not being able to gain him, he thought of getting rid of him, for he regarded

[1] *Mémoires du duc de Rovigo.*
[2] *Quinze ans de haute police sous Napoléon.*
[3] *Mémoires de Lafayette: mes rapports avéc le Premier Consul.*

every one as his enemy who was not his friend. But Moreau lived in retirement, without giving any hold against him, and the only faults with which he could be charged were expressions which did not furnish a sufficient weapon to strike a man who stood so high in public esteem. It was not, however, impossible to hope that so conspicuous a personage, placed in a situation to rally round him, whether he wished it or not, all the parties of opposition, would sooner or later be led to take some step that would implicate him, at least in appearance; hence the close supervision of the Consular police under which he was placed. To official espionage were added the assiduous investigations of Fouché, a Breton like himself, intimate with his secretary Fresnière, and who caused him to be watched by men in his province, in the hope of regaining the favour of the First Consul by some important revelation. Thanks to all these means, the police were informed of everything that was said at Moreau's, and were ready to take advantage of the first incautious speech to ruin him.

Such was the vigilant supervision exercised over Moreau, when, for his misfortune and for that of the cause which he served, the royalist committee of London conceived the unlucky idea of effecting his reconciliation with Pichegru, in the hope of afterwards drawing him into the track which they wanted him to follow. Fauche Borel, the bold and crafty tempter who was the first to speak to Pichegru in the name of the Bourbons, came to Paris, called upon Moreau, obtained from him assurances of interest and friendship for a former brother in arms, but nothing more. He himself admits, in his very curious *Mémoires*, in which there are among many correct statements several falsehoods dictated by vanity, 'that Moreau would not join in any conspiracy, and that he said they must let men and things wear out.'[1] Fauche was arrested shortly after this interview, and what proves that the Government had been informed of the object of his mission is, that the first question put to him was one relating to General Moreau. The project of reconciliation was then entrusted to the Abbé

[1] *Mémoires de Fauche Borel*, t. iii.

David, a Royalist agent, who was personally acquainted with the two generals. The police expected this time to lay hands upon some compromising documents, and the Abbé David was seized at Calais with all his papers, at the moment that he was about to embark for England. They found among these papers several relating to the projected reconciliation between Moreau and Pichegru, among others a letter, which was afterwards used on his trial, and in which he assured David that *he had never been opposed to Pichegru's return*, and that he was ready *to remove all obstacles* that delayed it. They found, besides, affectionate letters from Macdonald and Barthélemy for their old friend, but nothing that indicated a conspiracy. 'Moreau was agitated by this news,' says the official report in which these facts were stated;[1] 'he took steps to find out whether the Government was aware of it.—*Every one was silent.*' And this significant expression follows: '*The eye of the police followed every step of the agents of the enemy.*'

But the police did more than follow them; it encouraged them. If a complete light has not yet been thrown upon this subject as regards Georges and Pichegru, it has, we may safely affirm, with overwhelming clearness as far as concerns Moreau, the one of these three men that Bonaparte detested the most, and the one especially that he had the most interest in ruining. The violent indignation of his apologists, every time that this fact has been perceived or suspected, would be ridiculous if it was not above all else a revolting hypocrisy. What, this method of ruining his enemies by implicating them in plots to which they were strangers was then new to Napoleon? What man ever invented blacker machinations in order to rid himself of those who were obstacles to him? How had he acted towards the Government of Venice, when he had resolved to destroy this unfortunate Republic? by attributing to it, not in one circumstance, but during a whole year, a long series of plots of which he himself was the sole author. How had he acted on the 18th Fructidor, when he wanted

[1] Report of Régnier, read to the Legislative Body, in the sitting of February 17, 1804.

to ruin the moderate constitutionalists, Dumolard, Carnot, Barthélemy, and others? By imputing to them projects of assassination against himself, of proscription against the army, of usurpation against the Republic that they were defending! How had he proceeded on the 18th Brumaire, when he wished to overthrow republican institutions? By inventing a great Jacobin conspiracy, of which he did not succeed in creating even the shadow. What had he done, in short, the first time that he thought of hereditary power, at the publication of the famous *Parallèle entre César, Cromwell et Bonaparte?* He had drawn, as it were, almost against themselves, into a conspiracy got up by his agent Harel, unfortunate artists of intemperate language, but who would have fainted at the sight of a naked sword, and who were not even equal to presenting themselves on the theatre of the crime. We must be devoid of all historical penetration not to be struck with Bonaparte's innate propensity for these perfidious combinations, which are so repugnant to all noble and lofty minds. He had a natural taste for craft, which reveals itself in all epochs of his career, in small as well as in great things. Whether it be with the Commissioner of the Convention in Corsica, and Bonaparte was not then twenty years old,[1] or with the Venetian Republic, with Toussaint Louverture or the king of Spain, with Mourad-Bey or Sir George Rumbold, with the Marquis de Frotté or the Helvetic Republic, with the bookseller Palm or the Duc d'Enghien, with Drake or the opposition in the tribunate, we always find him true to himself,—always proceeding by traps and secret machinations, and it may be asserted that no one has ever excelled him in the art of laying snares for an enemy, of enticing him step by step towards an abyss into which he wished to precipitate him, and, to use his favourite expression, of *lulling him to sleep till the moment of his awakening.* His whole diplomacy was nothing else than the art of imputing conspiracies invented by himself to all the governments that he wanted to attack. This trait of character is so striking that it is displayed even in his military strategy, the most remarkable for surprises, feints,

[1] See vol. i. page 17.

and stratagems that has ever been known. And people exclaim at the supposition that Bonaparte was true to the habits of his whole life, concerning a man whom he detested the most, as the most dangerous to him, towards Moreau, whom up to his last day he endeavoured to calumniate and ruin! They are indignant at the idea that he ever thought of ruining Moreau,—he who would have ruined even Kléber, and who had so often put a price upon the head of his adversaries! By what feeling or by what scruples should he have been deterred? The word 'scruple' excites a smile applied to a man who in one morning caused the two thousand prisoners of Jaffa to be slaughtered with the bayonet. Improbability is not in this case on the side of those who accuse, but of those who justify.

By the arrest of the Abbé David, and by the examination of his papers, the Consular police had learned two things: first, that Moreau was disposed to a reconciliation with Pichegru, secondly, that hitherto there was no trace of a conspiracy in their communications, and consequently no means of compromising Moreau; but by their agents in London they also knew of the hopes that the emigrants founded upon this reconciliation, and the advantage that Pichegru flattered himself he should obtain from it. Instead of arresting the negotiators of this transaction, it was necessary to let them go on, and even to encourage them, till their steps and intrigues had created a sufficient plea against him whom they wanted to ruin. Nothing had been gained by the arrest of Fauche Borel and David; it was evident that if they continued thus, the conspiracy would not even have the commencement of an existence. They accordingly changed their tactics with regard to a third emissary; they contented themselves with following him and observing him in his journeys backwards and forwards from London to Paris.[1] This new negotiator, chosen in spite of the repugnance of Moreau,[2] was General Lajolais,

[1] This fact is officially stated in the same report of the Grand Juge, which we have already quoted.

[2] Fauche Borel gives several conclusive proofs of this, *Mémoires*, tome iii. The fact was, moreover, clearly proved in the trial of Moreau.

a particular friend of Pichegru's, compromised with him at the time of the 18th Fructidor, and not on active service at this period. Moreau was so disinclined to make use of Lajolais, and to enter into his views, that he refused him twelve louis, which he needed for his journey to London; and this sum was lent by Couchery, an old *employé* in the gendarmery, who played a very suspicious part in this affair.[1] A meddler, presumptuous, indiscreet, tormented by the ambition of playing a part, distracted by want of money, Lajolais was the most dangerous man that could have been employed in so delicate a matter. His principal anxiety in this grave affair which might cost the lives of so many illustrious persons appears to have been to play the man of importance, and to extract money either from the English Government or the Royalist committees. Knowing Moreau's grievances against the First Consul, his hatred to the new despotism, his connections with the principal malcontents both in the Senate and in the army, Lajolais did not hesitate to represent the general as disposed to put himself at the head of a movement against the Consular Government, which Moreau considered impossible in the present circumstances; soon he went much farther, and ventured to pledge Moreau's interest in favour of the Royalist cause, which was a barefaced lie. Nevertheless all the plans of the emigrants were based upon this falsehood, which Moreau could neither know nor contradict. He had a vague suspicion of the intrigues of Lajolais, without being aware of their extent; he warned Pichegru not to trust either him or his connections; but, owing to the difficulties of communication, this advice never reached him.

It was, then, upon the false assurances given by Lajolais that the Royalist plot was definitely formed. It was agreed that Georges, accompanied by the most resolute Chouans, should come to Paris to prepare the way and collect such elements of insurrection as the ancient Vendean cause could still furnish. Pichegru was to come next, to concert

[1] *Opinion sur le procès de Moreau*, by Lecourbe, Judge of the Criminal Court of Justice.

with Moreau, with the malcontent generals, with the opposition in the Senate, the tribunate, and the old public assemblies; when everything was ready, the Count d'Artois, followed by the Duc de Berri and the principal members of the French nobility, was to arrive to put himself at the head of a movement destined to overthrow the First Consul. The participation of so many eminent personages, of whom the most were men of the greatest honour and loyalty, excludes even the idea of assassination, which was afterwards ascribed to them; and Georges, who had been implicated without proof in the affair of the infernal machine, was particularly anxious not to expose himself afresh to such an accusation. He several times explained this to his co-operators, whose testimony on this point is unanimous and decisive. He wanted a battle, and, if it were possible, an insurrection; he energetically repelled the idea of assassination, and in reality, if he had entertained such an idea, nothing would have been easier than to carry it out during the six months that he spent in Paris before his arrest.[1] When he saw the impossibility of an insurrection, he prepared an attack of equal numbers on the First Consul's escort, which was generally composed of twenty horse.[2] About this it is customary to exclaim with horror: 'Is it credible? They imagined that in thus attacking the First Consul while surrounded by his guards, they were giving him battle, and were not assassins! They seemed to be on a par with the gallant Archduke Charles, fighting against General Bonaparte at Tagliamento or at Wagram!'[3] No; but they were on a par with General Bonaparte, attacking, on the 18th Brumaire, the unarmed deputies of the Five Hundred! They did not deserve the name of assassins more than he. It is in vain that a power called

[1] This is formally stated by Desmarest, head of the police *de sûreté*: 'Georges,' he says, 'animated by an inveterate hatred to Napoleon, stops *when he holds in his hands the life of his enemy*. The chief of guerilla warfare regulates his blows by the requirements of honour and strict policy' (*Quinze ans de haute police sous Napoléon*).

[2] And not from ten to twelve, as M. Thiers says.—Bonaparte to Soult, February 19th, 1804.

[3] Thiers: *History of the Consulate and the Empire*, vol. iv.

into existence by a stroke of violence endeavours to rob its adversaries of the arm of which it has itself made use; they have the same right to it; and as for popular ratification which it invokes in support of its inviolability, as they are the humble servants of success, it may be safely affirmed that he who succeeds is sure of having them. Authority usurped by force is always open to assault, and recourse to it becomes still more unassailable when such authority has plainly placed itself above the law, and is beyond the reach of any legal action. Each citizen then becomes its legitimate judge, and justice, banished from institutions, again finds itself in the conscience of every individual, its first and indestructible sanctuary.

It was not, then, either the means or the principle that the partisans of the 18th Brumaire could censure in the conspiracy of Georges; the only thing that they had a right to blame in it was its aim, that is to say, the *régime* that it proposed to substitute for the Consular Government. The restoration which it had in view, at a time when Royalists of all shades were still very little disposed to grant the concessions to which they afterwards resigned themselves, was not in fact worth more than the abuses which they wanted to destroy. As for the plan in itself, it was of a childish simplicity, and we are astonished that men like Pichegru and Georges ever lent a hand to it. It showed an ingenuousness rarely found among conspirators, to believe that Georges, with numerous agents, could reside in Paris, and there plot for several months, without attracting the attention of a police so suspicious and distrustful. It was still more puerile to suppose that, on the assurances of a discredited man like Pichegru, all the republican chiefs who had acquired glory and a position, and who thought that Bonaparte's tyranny would not last long, were suddenly going to throw themselves into the arms of the ancient *régime*, and follow in the wake of a Royalist general! Such an illusion can only be explained by the impatience natural to exiles, by the desire of deserving the support of England, by the blind imprudence of which the Count d'Artois afterwards gave so many proofs, and by the perfidious instigation

of agents who imposed upon some of the most influential members of the emigration.

Be this as it may, Georges disembarked the 21st of August 1803, on the beach at Biville, with a first party of conspirators, and from thence they all proceeded to Paris, by routes only known to themselves, and without touching upon a high road. They were left in perfect security, either because their arrival was not immediately known, or because the Government wanted to allow the plot to be organised, in order to draw into France the other men who were to join Georges, and to offer those whom they wished to ruin an opportunity of compromising themselves. They contented themselves with arresting, in September and October, some in Paris, others on the moment of disembarking, subaltern accomplices like Lebourgeois, Picot, Querelle, etc. The *Moniteur* formally states that 'the police had been warned of the departure and mission'[1] of the two first, a circumstance that is not one of the least perplexing for those who have endeavoured to prove that they had not been informed of the departure of Georges and his numerous companions, who were much more conspicuous men than these obscure adventurers. At any rate, it was not long before they were aware of their presence in Paris. They could not of course closely follow all their steps, and often lost their track, but they knew the most important, increased the surveillance round the dwellings of Moreau and his friends, and took precautions to protect the person of the First Consul.[2] Napoleon's communications to O'Meara, though for the most part false, contain on this subject a half avowal, which gives us a glimpse of the truth: 'They remained,' he says, 'in Paris for some time without being discovered, *though the police had some knowledge of them* through Méhée, who was in the pay of your ministers.'[3] This helps us to understand an expression of Desmarest upon Bonaparte's singular attitude when his agents spoke to him of the plot, before Pichegru's participa-

[1] *Moniteur* of January 30th, 1804.
[2] This fact is stated by Meneval himself in his *Souvenirs*.
[3] *Mémorial d'O'Meara*.

tion in it was known: 'You do not know,' he said, 'the quarter of that affair.' Méhée relates, on his side, in his libel published by order of Bonaparte, that he received in London, from the Bishop of Arras, intelligence of the plan of disembarking Monsieur, Pichegru, and the principal Royalist chiefs.[1] By the avowal of the French Government, then, the plan of the conspirators was known in Paris long before its realisation. A fact that is not less significant is that these unfortunate men, with whose *mission* they were so well acquainted, and among whom was that Querelle whose revelations furnished the principal evidence of the plot, remained several months in prison without being tried. A circumstance strange indeed, and well worthy of attention! What, here are men who have, they know, come from England to conspire against the First Consul, it is even said to assassinate him; they arrest them, they hold them at mercy, and they leave them there for months without interrogating them, without examining them, without dreaming of taking advantage of a circumstance so prejudicial to the English Government! This is, it must be owned, an extraordinary fact for all who know Bonaparte's antecedents; but the explanation is clear enough when we observe that the moment was not yet come for making them confess, and that the trial would have given the alarm to the other conspirators.

As soon as these ill-advised men had arrived in France they were followed by the Septembriseur Méhée, the man who had done the most to draw them into the snare. When once Georges and the Chouans had disembarked, Méhée was in fact much more useful in Paris than in London. He left London September 22d, passed by way of Holstein, and before entering France went to Munich to see Drake, the English *chargé d'affaires*. The First Consul received from him, through the medium of the chief judge, some reports which have not been published, but of which the object is clear: 'I have read,' he wrote to Régnier, 'the reports that you sent me; they appear to me interesting. *You must not be in a hurry for the arrests.* When the

[1] *Alliance des Jacobins français*, etc.

author has finished giving the information, we will combine a plan with him, and then we shall see what is to be done.'[1] Premature arrests would, in fact, have rendered all conspiracy impossible. But this was not all; he had resolved to make use of Méhée for a machination to which he did not attach less importance; he wanted to implicate and compromise in the conspiracy of Georges the numerous representatives that England had at the German courts, in order to bring about, if it were possible, a kind of diplomatic rupture between her and Germany. Méhée had been acquainted in England with Drake, the most active of these ministers; he knew that he was disposed to favour an internal movement against the French Government; it was necessary, while feigning to enter into his views, to push him on to a participation in the pretended plot against the person of the First Consul, in order to throw all the odium of it upon the British Cabinet. Méhée was to take advantage of his credulity in order to deceive the English Ministry on our military projects, and gain money from him, or at least 'the names of some Royalist agents and the address of houses in which they might take refuge to gain foreign countries.' Such is the ignoble plot that the First Consul did not blush to combine with this wretch, in the hope of rendering the results more complete which he trusted to obtain from the conspiracy of Georges. 'I desire,' he continued, addressing Régnier, 'that Méhée should write to Drake, *and, in order to give him confidence*, he is to inform him *that till the great blow can be struck* he thinks he could promise to get some one to take from the First Consul's table in his secret cabinet some notes in his own handwriting upon his great expedition, or some other important paper; that this hope is founded upon an usher of the cabinet, etc.' Then followed all the details that were calculated to give confidence to the British minister, and a statement of the pecuniary conditions that Méhée was to propose. All this, it must not be forgotten, was written November 1st, 1803. What was then this *great blow* which Bonaparte here says was to be struck later,—

[1] Bonaparte to Régnier, November 1st, 1803.

this great blow that he announced so long before the official discovery of the conspiracy, if, as it has been asserted, he was still in ignorance of the plan of his enemies? He was so much the better acquainted with it, that he was working at it himself. Certain of their arrangements, he offered them facilities which they had not dreamed of, taking care at the same time to hinder the plot from succeeding. The opportunity seemed to him good for ruining at once all those who gave him umbrage. We see by the *Mémoires* of Consalvi that at the end of October he accused the emigrant Vernègues of being connected with the great plot, which he is supposed to have known nothing of till the following month of February; he was thus caught in his own snare. He believed that when once the idea of the conspiracy was raised, all his adversaries would necessarily embrace it with eagerness. He was, moreover, better informed on this point than the English ministers, for Drake himself knew nothing of Georges' plot, and his ignorance made him avoid the snare that had been laid for him. If he had intrigues with Paris he did not make them known, and Méhée was only able to obtain money from him. Drake's letters, which the *Moniteur* published with so much clamour, the 25th of March 1804, only proved the innocence of this diplomatic agent in the affair of Georges. Like his countryman Spencer Smith at Munich, Drake was endeavouring to create a movement similar to that which Bonaparte was preparing in Ireland against the English Government, but he remained to the end in ignorance of the true conspiracy.

A second disembarkation, directed by Captain Wright, who had already brought Georges to France, was effected in the month of December; the third took place on the 16th of January. This last expedition included Pichegru, the Marquis de Rivière, the two Polignacs, and the principal chiefs of the militant emigrants. The Count d'Artois and the Duc de Berri were not to arrive till the last moment, when all the preparations were terminated. The plot so artfully encouraged, if not organised, by the Consular police, was drawing to its issue, for without knowing either the

exact point of disembarkation or the places of refuge, they knew that the greater part of the conspirators were in Paris, or about to proceed there. The day before the one on which Pichegru disembarked, January 15th, 1804, the Government Orator read to the Legislative Body his *exposé de la situation de la République*, in which we find these remarkable words: 'The British Government *will attempt to throw, and has perhaps already thrown*, upon our coasts some of the monsters it has nourished in order to rend the country that gave them birth!' This safe prediction was made to prepare men's minds for what was about to take place. The time for action was in reality come, for they could not, without exposing themselves to serious risks, leave the conspirators any longer free in Paris. The 21st of January, six days after the disembarkation of Pichegru in France, the First Consul at last decided to bring to trial the Chouans, Picot, Lebourgeois, Querelle, etc., who were, he said, come from London with the *mission* of assassinating him, and whom, however, he had left in prison since the month of September. He took this resolution, he said at St. Helena, in the middle of the night, upon *an idea* which suddenly struck him, that these men must know everything;[1] by *a sort of inspiration*, repeat his apologists,[2] with their customary complaisance. This divination is legendary: 'I have,' he said, in a note addressed to Cambacérès, '*secret information* which leads me to believe that Querelle is come here to assassinate me.'[3] This is more precise. And what is remarkable is, that he was so sure of his fact that he gave them at once the alternative of confessing or being shot. The two first having refused to make the avowal demanded of them, were immediately executed; the third, Querelle, at the moment of sharing the same fate, asked to reveal something, and his deposition furnished the evidence that was absolutely necessary for the trial. Thanks to him, they were able to state juridically the arrival of Georges in France, and they learned what they had not hitherto known, the

[1] Memorial of Las Cases.
[2] Thibaudeau, Savary, Bignon, Desmarest, Thiers, etc.
[3] January 21st, 1804. *Correspondance.*

precise point at which the disembarkation had been effected and the track followed by the conspirators. This declaration was confirmed by that of a man named Troche, who had been their guide. The First Consul sent his trustworthy Savary to the cliff of Biville, where he stationed himself, recognised the English brig, and tried by a variety of signals, not knowing the one agreed upon, to draw the last conspirators to the coast. He remained there twenty-eight whole days, waiting and watching the prey that escapes him.[1]

From the moment that he had decided to make Querelle confess, the First Consul had displayed an extraordinary activity in the proceedings. We see him in his correspondence[2] pointing out the houses that were to be searched, naming the individuals who would give information, hurrying on the arrests, conducting the examinations, and giving the most minute indications to lead to the discovery of those whose track they were following. Every means appeared good to him in these relentless prosecutions. He went so far as to summon the Spanish Minister to deliver up to him, or to send to *the penal colonies of Africa*, two French bishops, whom he accused of connivance with his enemies.[3] He employed other bishops as spies against the Royalists. Besides Régnier, Réal, Fouché, the chief of the gendarmery, Moncey, he engaged the Bishop of Orleans, the ex-Abbé Bernier, who had kept up his connection with some Chouans, and was doing his best to ruin his former co-religionists. He would have enrolled the Pope himself in his police if he had believed it possible; he had already thought of doing so with regard to Ireland: 'I should be glad to know,' he wrote to him, January 1st, 'if your Holiness has *quelques renseignements et fils*, and in what way your Holiness influences the Catholics in that country.' The Bishop of Orleans vied in zeal with Fouché, who came as an amateur to make inquiries into the result of the investigations, and give his advice on the plan of proceedings. As his information was almost always more correct than that of the chief judge:

[1] *Mémoires ae Rovigo.*

[2] See the *Correspondance* from January 25th to February 15th 1804.

[3] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, February 16th.

'You still busy yourself with police,' said Bonaparte, with a kind of admiration.

'Oh,' replied Fouché, 'I have kept a few friends, who tell me what is going on.'

Meanwhile, the prisons were filling with the men arrested; it was impossible that, among so many weak or over-excited brains, some one should not be found to reveal the true or imaginary projects of the conspiracy, and, above all, to prove the fact that Bonaparte had most at heart, namely, the reality of the recent connection, whatever it may have been, between Pichegru and Moreau. This inevitable incident took place in the night between the 13th and 14th of February. One of Georges' lieutenants, Bouvet de Lozier, a man of strong imagination, endeavoured to escape from the horrors of his situation by suicide. Restored to consciousness in spite of himself by the intervention of his gaolers, he made the following day, in the presence of Réal, the famous declaration which was to ruin Moreau. His deposition, evidently arranged by Réal,[1] was a faithful account enough of the general plan of the conspiracy, as far as a subaltern actor could know or conceive it. He related the goings and comings of Lajolais from Paris to London, the landings of Georges and Pichegru, the intention of Monsieur to enter France to put himself at the head of the Royalist party; he proved, moreover, an important fact for those who wanted to implicate Moreau in the plot, the interview of that general with Pichegru and Georges on the boulevard of the Madeleine. But independent of the reality of the fact, which by itself proved nothing, what positive charges against Moreau did this deposition contain? Strange to say (and it is almost impossible to believe it, when we consider the use that was going to be made of it against him), it accused him precisely of *having caused the plot to fail by his opposition!* Moreau, said Bouvet de Lozier, *had promised* to join the cause of the Bourbons. The Royalists

[1] It suffices, in order to prove this, to quote the first lines of Bouvet's confession: 'It is a man just escaped from the gates of the tomb, and still covered with the shadows of death, who calls for vengeance upon those whose treachery has plunged him and his party into ruin.'

enter France, Moreau retreats. He proposes that they should work for him, and name him dictator.[1] And what proof does he give of these pretended promises of Moreau? None, except the assurances that Lajolais had taken to London without authority. Moreover, Bouvet soon after admitted that he had believed this without proof, and that he ceased to believe it. What proof was there of the other assertion, still more improbable, that Moreau had proposed to the Royalists to appoint him dictator? None, except his own conjectures, founded upon Moreau's refusal to enter into the plot. Moreover, this confession itself, which he afterwards retracted, contained these words: 'The accusation that I bring against Moreau rests, perhaps, only upon *half proofs*.' Half proofs! it did not require so much to ruin him whom he accused.

The only point clearly proved by Bouvet de Lozier's confession is, that the conspirators had reckoned upon Moreau, and that Moreau had resolutely refused to aid them, and this had caused trouble and discouragement among them. Was that an action that could be regarded as a crime? was it a sufficient reason for dishonouring the first general of the Republic? In all that Bouvet accused him of, his promises alone would have constituted a wrong less towards the First Consul than towards the Royalists, whom he had drawn into the snare; but before they admitted a fact so inconsistent with the known character of General Moreau, ought they not to have proved the truth of it, at least by some appearances? Could they believe that Moreau, aspiring to the dictatorship, was going to ask it of the Bourbons after having deceived them? Could they suppose for an instant that a man, unless he were a lunatic, would make use of such a subterfuge? And he who was supposed to employ it here was the conqueror of Hohenlinden; he was the only general who had never meddled in any political intrigue; he was the man who had rejected the proposals of Sieyès before the 18th Brumaire. Bonaparte himself felt the improbability of the pretext which his hatred made use of, and he

[1] Declaration of Bouvet.

endeavoured, according to his custom, to gain belief for a fable which has hitherto been accepted without examination. He has represented himself as being unable to credit Moreau's guilt, and as resisting the solicitations of those who urged his arrest. He refused, he says, for several days, and at last replied to their pressure: 'Well, prove to me that Pichegru is here, and I will sign Moreau's arrest!' As if he had been obliged, in taking this extreme measure, to do violence to his own feelings! And he adds that he did not decide upon doing this till he had obtained from a brother of Pichegru's the certitude of the presence of this general in Paris, which forced him to yield to evidence.

It may be asked, in the first place, who could have so great an interest in ruining Moreau, among the familiars of the First Consul, as to solicit his arrest with so much eagerness? He was disgraced, was living in retirement, and gave umbrage to no one. Bonaparte alone hated him because he recognised in him his successor designate and his rival in glory. We vainly inquire next how Pichegru's presence added to the charges brought against Moreau. That there had been a reconciliation between them had been known since the seizure of the papers from the Abbé David; this was no new fact; but that, in spite of Pichegru's presence in Paris, and in spite of the remembrance of their old friendship, Moreau had refused to aid the conspiracy, as Bouvet so bitterly complained, was not a circumstance to aggravate his situation, since it cleared him of all the suspicions that had been conceived against him. This is not all. Bonaparte asserts that he hesitated *several days* before he decided to have Moreau arrested, after the confession of Bouvet de Lozier; this confession was made on the 14th of February, and the arrest was decided in a council held the same evening.[1] He asserts that he refused to sign it till he had assured himself of Pichegru's presence in Paris; there are a thousand proofs that he had

[1] The date of Bouvet's declaration is shown by the indictment and the deeds of the trial. With regard to the order, it was decided upon the evening of the 14th, and signed the following morning.—Bonaparte to Régnier, February 15th, 1804.

known for several days, not only of the presence of this general, but even in what houses he had passed his time. As early as the 13th of February he wrote to Soult 'that for *a week* he had been following up Georges and his band, that Pichegru was with Georges, and that he knew where they had slept the preceding Sunday.' The same fact is stated a little later by the *Moniteur* itself, which could not foresee the singular *alibi* that Bonaparte would one day plead: 'It is only since the 8th of February,' says this paper, 'that the police have known that Pichegru is in the capital, and have been following him up.'[1] It is very possible that they had known it earlier, but without having a clue to his whereabouts.

Thus the inventions fall to the ground that were devised by Bonaparte in justification of a measure that can only be explained by the impatience of his hatred. Régnier, who was charged to question Moreau after his arrest, had orders to propose to bring him at once to the First Consul, if he would consent to atone by a voluntary avowal for the crimes of which he was accused; and historians have not failed to point out, in appealing to the *Mémoires de Sainte-Hélène*, the clemency of this offer and the obduracy of Moreau's refusal. It is most probable that if Moreau had consented to go and ask pardon, and humble himself for a crime that he had not committed, Bonaparte would have been happy to overwhelm him with his forgiveness and his favours; but such a step is difficult to obtain from an honest man, unjustly persecuted and strong in his own innocence; Bonaparte had to forego this satisfaction, greatly to his annoyance. He laid the blame on Régnier, being unable to admit that misfortune could also have its dignity: 'That is what comes from having to do with an idiot!' he exclaimed, when the chief judge announced to him the result of his mission.[2]

The 17th of February Régnauld de Saint-Jean d'Angély read before the tribunate the report of the chief judge upon the conspiracy, a report specially drawn up against Moreau, in which his conduct was abominably misrepresented, and

[1] *Moniteur*, February 23, 1804. [2] Thibaudeau.

which contained the significant admission, 'that the eye of the police had followed all the steps of the enemy's agents.' It might have been said to have guided them. The Assembly listened to this report with stupefaction. Some were incredulous, others indignant; but no one any longer ventured to express his private feelings. Moreau's brother, who was a member of the tribunate, alone raised his voice in the midst of a dismal silence, and in accents of the deepest grief: 'I declare,' he exclaimed, 'to this Assembly, to the whole nation, that my brother is innocent of the atrocious crimes imputed to him. . . . Give him the means to prove his innocence, and he will prove it. I ask in his name, in my own, in the name of all his weeping family, in the name of his country that he has served with so much glory, that all the importance be given to his trial that the accusation demands; I ask that he may be tried *by his natural judges*, and I affirm that all that has been said here is a tissue of infamous calumny!' It was a just presentiment that made him appeal to the protecting guarantees of all accused. The Assembly was moved, but expressed neither sympathy nor blame. Treilhard, one of the orators of the Government, repelled as an insult the doubt implicitly contained in the last words of the tribune Moreau: 'The Government,' he said, 'had always shown too scrupulous an observance of justice *for any one to have the right to suppose that they wished to deviate from it.*'[1]

A few days later this solemn engagement was confirmed by these words of the First Consul, which were immediately published, in order to show his magnanimity: 'This is a case for the ordinary tribunals, *and I intend that all forms shall be scrupulously observed.*'[2] He then perceived that he had promised more than he could fulfil, for under such conditions Moreau's acquittal was inevitable. The charges brought against him amounted to so little, that his condemnation could only be obtained from intimidated or bought magistrates. The 25th of February a Senatus Consultum consequently appeared, which suspended the jury in

[1] *Archives Parlementaires*: Sitting of February 17, 1804.
[2] *Moniteur* of February 23d.

the department of the Seine. It was not enough to have supposed the crime, if the judges were not made sure of.[1] At the same time, a fresh appeal was made to the means that had been employed a few months before to excite minds against England, and in the army, and in all the constituted bodies, a number of addresses were got up against the illustrious man whose character was to be ruined. Moreau's arrest, the remembrance of his great actions, so cruel a recompense for so much glory and purity, had awakened in his favour the interest of all generous minds, and even of the indifferent, who had not the slightest suspicion of the dark plot of which he was the victim. These importunate demands of pity had to be stifled under the cry of a blind and brutal anger; public opinion had to be gained, as a false witness is suborned, and this could only be done by deception. The Bodies of the State, in which were so many men who would have applauded Moreau's elevation with ecstasy, hastened to the Tuileries to display a feigned indignation. The president of the Tribunate alone ventured to call a *denunciation* what every one else spoke of as a crime: 'What,' exclaimed Bonaparte, 'Moreau is already *guilty* in the eyes of the Bodies of State, and you do not even consider him as *accused!*'[2] The *Moniteur* suppressed in the address from the Tribunate all that had displeased the First Consul. All the chiefs of the army followed next, to pay their tribute of insult to the glorious captain who had so many times led them to victory. Without waiting till some explanation had confirmed the impeachment, they lavished upon him the names of traitor and brigand, and seemed to vie with each other in abuse, either because they saw it in a safe means of securing the favour of the master, or because the noble attitude of Moreau had for a long time appeared to them an indirect criticism on their own servility. Murat gave the signal, and for several months the *Moniteur* was filled with insulting and threatening addresses, to which were soon added

[1] This was, says M. Thiers, an error founded upon 'an honourable principle.'

[2] Miot de Melito: *Mémoires.*

episcopal charges, according to an already established custom. 'Vengeance! vengeance! vengeance! this is our rallying word!' exclaimed General Baraguay d'Hilliers,[1] in one of these addresses, and the greater part of them might be summed up in these few words. A few generals, however, dared timidly to display their interest in favour of the accused, among whom were Dessolles and the rare survivors of that army of the Rhine which had almost wholly perished at Saint Domingo. The 26th division, garrisoned at Mayence, expressed their astonishment 'that a man who had served the State, and who but lately was so dear to the armies, could have associated with these brigands. *It is a painful idea*,'[2] added these honest men.

In order to complete the effect produced by these harangues, reports were ostentatiously published that were supposed to have been spread by the conspirators on the subject of Bonaparte's assassination, with a view to prepare opinions for it. These reports arrived just at the moment when they were most needed[3] to ruin the conspirators, which is a first reason for suspecting them. We see by many instances in Napoleon's correspondence that he had no scruples about fabricating either news or extracts from foreign papers, which he then published as perfectly authentic. These more than doubtful reports were given as coming from London, from Vienna, from the principal towns of the Continent, and even from the West Indies. A professor of languages, said the *Moniteur*, had advertised in London, 'that as Bonaparte's assassination and the restoration of the Bourbons were on the point of being effected, the French would return to France, which induced the author of the advertisement to offer his services as a master of languages.' And what was the date, according to the *Moniteur*, of this notice, so strangely worded in the style of a police agent? The 30th of January, that is to say, the same date that Bonaparte had decided on to make Querelle confess and follow up the conspiracy, the time

[1] *Moniteur* of February 19, 1804.
[2] *Moniteur* of February 23.
[3] *Moniteur* of February 23 and 29.

when the conspirators had the most need of mystery and secrecy! If they had really formed the project of assassination that was attributed to them, would not the commonest prudence have suggested to them, or rather, was it not of the highest interest to them, not to divulge it prematurely?

This story of the murder, moreover, was no longer admissible even then, when they were making the most ostentatious use of it. By degrees, as the arrests and examinations increased, it was impossible to mistake the true character of the conspiracy, and the Consular police knew for a certainty that the aim of the plot was an insurrectionary movement, and not an assassination. By the fresh declarations of Bouvet, Picot, Lajolais, and other prisoners, they were aware of the complicity of the Count d'Artois, the Duc de Berri, and the principal members of the French nobility, some of whom were already in Paris, others on the point of arriving, and no one could admit that so many eminent personages would have gone so far as to compromise their cause by an assassination. With regard to Moreau, the fact of his interviews with Pichegru existed, but so did also that of his refusal to take part in the plot. He had in reality seen his old companion in arms two or three times, he had made no mystery of his hatred to the despotism of Bonaparte, and of his desire to overthrow it if he saw the possibility of doing so; but he energetically expressed to Pichegru his regret at seeing him connected with the Bourbons, his invincible repugnance at working for them; and if he had seen Georges, which was not clearly proved, he had only seen him reluctantly, like a man taken by surprise. But, judging from the odium thrown upon his most simple acts, it was easy to foresee how this circumstance would be turned to account against him, and in his first examination he denied everything; a course that was not less fatal to him than an avowal, in a situation in which neither means could have saved him.

However, neither Pichegru nor Georges was as yet arrested, and Savary, still stationed at Biville cliff, was endeavouring in vain to attract by his signals the eminent personages who were comprised in the fourth disembarka-

tion. As early as February 13th, Bonaparte, writing to Soult of Georges and Pichegru, said: 'We shall have them this evening!' A fortnight had elapsed since then; his police had pursued them from abode to abode, hunted them in Paris like wild beasts, without being able to seize them: this disappointment carried his impatience and irritation to their height, and, as on all occasions when his will was thwarted by some great obstacle, we see the unbridled nature of the Cæsars of the decline reappear in him. He presented and had voted by the Legislative Body an atrocious law, which punished by pain of death whoever should give shelter to Pichegru or his accomplices, and with six years of penal servitude whoever, being aware of their hiding-place, should not denounce them. This measure was immediately passed, and it was decided that it should have the force of law from the day even of its passing. At the same time, the gates of Paris were closed, the river was guarded by a line of boats, and sentinels were placed along the walls, so that no one could scale them. Paris, handed over to the police and plunged into a state of constant alarm, witnessed a return of the denunciations, the violation of homes, midnight arrests, and all the iniquities of the Reign of Terror, without any of the public dangers which were excuses for that unfortunate period, for a single man was the cause of it; and at the time when, for the satisfaction of vengeance and pride, he was producing so much anxiety, this man wrote to M. de Melzi, his representative in the Cisalpine, these words, which will stand as the judgment of history upon this pretended conspiracy: '*I have not run any real danger, for the police had their eyes upon all these machinations.*'[1]

Pichegru, betrayed by the friend of whom he had asked shelter, was arrested on February 28th, the same day on which the law of public safety had been passed; Georges was not taken till the 9th of March. Recognised as he was getting into a cabriolet, on quitting a house surrounded by the police, not far from the Pantheon, he was followed by the officers as far as the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, where

[1] Bonaparte to M. de Melzi, May 6, 1804.

one of them rushed forward and laid hold of the horse's bridle. Georges stretched him dead with a pistol, and he wounded with a second shot another officer who tried to arrest him, but the passers-by having then rushed on him, he was seized and garotted. The two Polignacs and the Marquis de Rivière had been arrested a few days before. All the principal conspirators were now in the hands of the Government; Paris began to breathe, but the gates were still closed, and the measures of terror were maintained for several days longer. Faithful to their system of calumny and falsehood, the Government announced that Georges on being examined 'had confessed without hesitation that he had been in Paris for several months, *and that his mission was to assassinate the First Consul.*'[1] This was just the contrary of the truth. Georges energetically protested against the design that was attributed to him; he had come to Paris, he said, not to assassinate the First Consul, but to attack him by open force in the midst of his guards, and, if it were possible, to seize his person; he was to act in company with a French prince, whom they were still waiting for, and only under his direction;[2] moreover, he would name no one.

Pichegru's attitude was not less firm. After having explained his return to France by the desire to revisit his country, he maintained an absolute silence, confining himself to saying that he would answer before the Tribunal. Nothing more was obtained from Moreau: the fact of his interviews with Pichegru was proved by fresh depositions, but they also bore witness to his refusal to aid the conspiracy. No means was neglected of drawing from them some compromising admission. Hope, a thousand times more dangerous than fear, was held out to them in order to obtain this end. Réal went to see Pichegru, expressed to him the First Consul's regret at seeing the conqueror of Holland reduced to such a state of humiliation, and his generous and clement intentions with regard to him. Pichegru had lived in Guiana during his exile, he knew the

[1] *Moniteur* of March 10.
[2] First and second examination of March 9.

resources of the country; Bonaparte had formed the project of raising and increasing this colony; he would be happy to send the general there, and thus afford him the opportunity of re-establishing his reputation by rendering fresh services to France.[1] Pichegru appeared to listen with joy to these propositions, but he revealed nothing to the agent of the police, who, having failed to draw anything from him, did not again speak of Guiana. Réal was more successful with Moreau, whose good and simple soul, not having the same secrets to keep, and incapable of long mistrust, allowed himself to be drawn into taking an unfortunate step. Since the day on which he had refused to allow himself to be conducted to the First Consul, Moreau had often been told that Bonaparte had no grievances against him, that he only wished to strike the Royalists, that he only asked of him a frank and loyal explanation of his conduct in the late affairs, and that when once this avowal was obtained, he should be happy to hold out his hand to his ancient rival in glory. These assurances repeated several times, the supplications of his family in despair, the fear of being influenced by prejudices that were perhaps unjust, decided Moreau to accept these advances of a feigned generosity. He wrote to the First Consul, not to ask his pardon, as has been said,[2] but to place the evidence before his eyes by a faithful statement of the facts. His calm and dignified letter is a very correct account of his connection with Pichegru before and after the conspiracy; it is rather a deposition than an apology; but though there is nothing in it that stains his memory, we feel what it must have cost his pride, for to address the First Consul was to transform him into a judge —him who had hitherto been only an enemy![3] For this reason only the letter was an error. Bonaparte had no sooner received this painful confidence addressed to his generosity, confided to his honour, wrung from the distressed

[1] Desmarest: *Témoignages historiques, ou quinze ans de haute police sous Napoléon.* [2] Thibaudeau.

[3] Except, perhaps, one expression: '*Enemies* have separated us since that time.' Between Moreau and Bonaparte was something else besides enemies.

man whom he had drawn into the snare, than he hastened to make use of it in Moreau's trial: 'I placed your letter yesterday in the hands of the First Consul,' wrote the Grand Judge ;[1] *his heart was deeply affected by the rigorous measures* which the safety of the State enjoins on him. Now that proceedings have been commenced, the law requires that no evidence shall be kept back from the judges, and the Government has ordered me to add your letter to the other proofs.'

However satisfactory may have been for Bonaparte the results obtained, they had not answered his expectations, for, on the one hand, the charges brought against Moreau were very insufficient to prove his guilt; and, on the other, the two princes, Count d'Artois and the Duc de Berri, to whose capture he attached the highest importance, had definitely escaped him. For some time past Savary's reports had shown him the uselessness of a longer watch on the point named for the disembarkation. Decided as he was to strike the Bourbons personally, in order to disgust them with conspiracies and terrify their partisans, he had immediately inquired if there were not within his reach another member of this family, which he doubly detested since they had fought hand to hand with him, and since they had contemptuously rejected his offer of two millions as the price of a renunciation of the crown of France. Unhappily for the glory of the First Consul, this Bourbon was found; he had resided for nearly two years at Ettenheim, very near Strasburg, but in the territory of Baden. He was the Duc d'Enghien, son of the Prince de Condé, a young man full of ardour and courage, always in the foremost rank in the battles in which his father's army had taken part. Having retired to Ettenheim at the end of the war, he had lived there, attracted by a romantic passion for the Princess Charlotte de Rohan, whom he had secretly married, while the neighbourhood of the Black Forest allowed him to satisfy his taste for hunting. A perfect stranger to the conspiracy, of which he did not even know the existence, he was waiting till the English

[1] *Moniteur* of March 8, 1804.

Cabinet, which gave him a pension, should send him notice to resume his services in the corps of the emigrants. Bonaparte caused him to be watched by an ancient servitor of his house, named Lamothe, whose report gave no evidence of his complicity with the conspirators of Paris,[1] but mentioned two circumstances calculated to raise suspicions: the first was the presence at Ettenheim of Dumouriez, whose name the agent had by mistake confused with that of the Marquis de Thumery; the second was a widely-spread report, though equally erroneous,[2] that the Duc d'Enghien sometimes ventured to go to the theatre at Strasburg. But these two facts, supposing them proved, which was not the case, did not constitute a serious presumption, for nothing had hitherto shown that Dumouriez belonged to the conspiracy, and if the duke went stealthily to Strasburg, it by no means followed that he had come as far as Paris. The Government had, moreover, in their hands the correspondence of Drake with Méhée, they had the reports of their agents in the neighbourhood, of Taylor and Spencer Smith, they had the despatches of M. de Massias, our minister at Baden, and they knew so much the better that there was no foundation in Drake's conspiracy, that Bonaparte had himself organised it, and held all the threads of the imbroglio. If the Duc d'Enghien had played at Ettenheim the part attributed to him, it is certain that some mention of it would be found in the various documents, which are all silent about him. Napoleon could not for a moment believe that the Duc d'Enghien was conspiring against him, and we can only regard as an abominable comedy the famous scene, so often brought forward, which Desmarest first related: 'Well, M. Réal, you never told me that the Duc d'Enghien was four leagues from my frontier, organising a military plot; am I then a dog, that the first comer may murder with impunity?' Then came Talleyrand, who met with the same reception, and after him Cambacérès, who,

[1] Report of the quartermaster of gendarmery, Lamothe, dated March 5, 1804.

[2] It had been proved to be so, not only by the correspondence of the duke, but by the testimony of his officers.

on hearing that it was proposed to seize and shoot the Duc d'Enghien, respectfully expressed a wish that the *severity would not go so far!* 'Learn,' replied Bonaparte, 'that I will not spare *my murderers!*'[1] Moreover, this explosion of feigned anger appears so uncalled for, even to the author of this narrative, that he explains it by Napoleon's persuasion that the Duc d'Enghien was the *French prince* who was to put himself at the head of the conspirators. But they had named this French prince more than a month before in their depositions; it was the Count d'Artois, followed by the Duc de Berri. This prince was to come from England and not from the banks of the Rhine; it was he whom Savary had been waiting for twenty-eight days at Biville cliff. This second error is then still less admissible than the first. The only crime of the Duc d'Enghien was being within reach of Bonaparte at the moment that Bonaparte needed the blood of a Bourbon, and it was for this reason alone that he was chosen and struck.

All of the arguments invented both at the time and since, for throwing upon chance or passive instruments the responsibility of the murder, fall to the ground before a simple statement of the facts. It was at the end of February when Bonaparte learned that he must definitely renounce all hope of drawing the Count d'Artois into the ambuscade of Biville; he immediately made Réal write to the prefect of Strasburg, to inquire if the Duc d'Enghien was at Ettenheim. In this letter of March 1st to M. Shée, Réal does not ask: 'Is the duke conspiring? Have you any information to give concerning him?' He simply asks this: 'Is the duke still at Ettenheim?'[2] Lamothe's report arrived at Paris March 9, the 10th of March Bonaparte gave Caulaincourt and Ordener orders to cross the frontier, and invest one Offenburg, and the other Ettenheim. This fact is closely connected with all that precedes it; it was the resolution of a violent soul impatient to strike. How can it be attributed to another than himself, who was then everything, and who

[1] *Quinze ans de haute police*, etc.

[2] Documents quoted by Nougarède de Fayet: *Recherches historiques sur le procès du Duc d'Enghien.*

alone in this affair was carried away by passion and blinded by self-interest! In his conversations at St. Helena, sometimes he claimed the resolution as his own;[1] at others, he ascribed it to the perfidious counsels of involuntary actors who were mixed up in this melancholy drama, as if he was accustomed to be influenced by those around him, especially upon questions of such importance! And whom does he accuse of this? The man who, by his position, had the least interest in hurrying him on to such an excess, and who, by his character, felt the most repugnance to it, Talleyrand,[2]—the cold, prudent, moderate Talleyrand, the man of middle courses, the enemy of extreme parties, whose nature was complaisant even to cowardice, but neither bad nor cruel. And to what end would Talleyrand have imagined this crime? To compromise Bonaparte for ever with the Bourbons and render their return impossible! But why? What fear or what ambition could inspire in him such madness? Was this royal race between himself and the throne? What had he so much to dread in the Bourbons —he who had been steeped in none of the excesses of the Revolution, who had not been either a regicide like Fouché, or a terrorist like Bonaparte—he who was one of the few possible statesmen in the event of a restoration?

To this false and cowardly excuse, pleaded by a man who sometimes repudiated his own crime, and sometimes gloried in it with cynical pride, according as he thought of appeasing or amazing historians, the apologists of the reign[3] have added justifications of which he had himself never thought, and of which the success would probably have furnished him with fresh reasons for despising men more ingenious than the tyrant himself in freeing his tyranny from reproach. Such is the tale of a pretended *quid pro quo*, which was Bonaparte's determining motive. This story, which appears to have been originally invented by Réal and Savary, men strongly interested in exculpating their master in order to clear their own memory, consists in

[1] Napoleon's testament.
[2] O'Meara, Las Cases.
[3] Savary, Meneval, Desmarest, Bignon, Thiers.

maintaining that the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien was only resolved upon on the conviction that he was a certain mysterious personage, known by the name of *Charles*, whom some of the prisoners said they had seen at Georges', and of whom they gave a description. According to this version, Bonaparte was persuaded that this personage was the prince who was to put himself at the head of the conspiracy in order to direct it, and he only ordered the Duc d'Enghien to be seized 'that he might *confront* him with the witnesses;'[1] that is to say, that he might prove his identity with this unknown individual; hence the fatal error which led to the catastrophe of Vincennes. In the first place, we find no trace of this conviction in the original documents; they had the most minute description of the mysterious personage,—'bald, fair, middle height,' etc. This description did not answer in any point to that of the Duc d'Enghien; the first gendarme could have proved it, and the question was not even asked of the agent sent to Ettenheim to watch the duke! In the second place, this description was no other than that of Charles Pichegru, whose identity they had easily been able to prove, since he had been confined in the Temple for ten days, with the prisoners who had denounced him, and when the Duc d'Enghien was taken, no one for a moment thought of the confrontation. In the third place, Bonaparte had known since February 14th, that is to say for a month, by the confession of Bouvet de Lozier, that the chiefs of the conspiracy were the Count d'Artois and the Duc de Berri, who were coming from England, the centre of the plot, and not from the banks of the Rhine; and it was only because he had failed to get possession of their persons that he thought of seizing the Duc d'Enghien, whose name had never even been pronounced in a single deposition.

There is more: the published account of Georges' trial shows that when Picot was questioned upon the name of the mysterious personage, *as far back as the 14th of February*, he replied that it could be no other than Pichegru, and his declaration was confirmed by all the other

[1] An expression of Réal's, reported by Savary.

prisoners. Every one of these assertions, and all that has since been added to them, to make them appear more probable, breaks down under a close examination.[1] Not only was the original determination Bonaparte's, but never was a resolution more freely pondered over and adopted, never was one more independent of that fatality, of those errors which so often influence our designs, and never was one more *personal;* it bears his signature, and has nothing in common with the revolutionary atrocities in which we always meet with the blind inflexibility of a principle. The terror struck in the name of the law; here it is the Corsican *vendetta* which pursues its enemy, in his children, in his family, and, when occasion requires, in his most distant relations.

There was, it is said, a council,[2] in which the measure was only discussed for the sake of form, and in which Cambacérès claims the honour of having given counsels of moderation, that were too timid to be listened to, which drew upon him this famous reply: 'You have become very sparing of the blood of the Bourbons!' But we must put in the list of stories the anecdote of a pretended report, read by Talleyrand in support of the measure, which he stole from the archives to burn, but left by mistake at the bottom of a drawer,[3] where an avenging providence took care to preserve it. These are gross falsehoods that are not worth discussion. The only document that Talleyrand drew up at that time (and it is too much for his honour) is the one in which, as minister of foreign affairs, he informed the Elector of Baden of the violation of territory which the First Consul had committed 'with the deepest regret.'

[1] M. Thiers has substituted for Savary's story another *quiproquo* founded upon an expression of Léridant in his deposition of March 10th; but this version is still more difficult to defend, for at this date everything was decided. M. Thiers has only a vague idea of the facts. He goes so far as to attribute the sallies of Bonaparte against Markoff to the complicity of this diplomatist with the conspirators! Yet these scenes took place six months before, and Markoff had quitted France November 28, 1803.

[2] According to Desmarest this council is reduced to the conversation before referred to, which is very probable.

[3] Meneval, Savary.

On the 15th of March 1804 a detachment of dragoons set out from Schelestadt, in the middle of the night, under the orders of Colonel Ordener, crossed the Rhine, surprised Ettenheim, and surrounded the house in which the Duc d'Enghien lived. He was at first inclined to reply to the summons to open the door by firing upon his assailants: he was deterred from doing so by a German officer, who was near him, and who having asked him 'if he was compromised,' upon his reply in the negative pointed out to him the uselessness of resistance;[1] he surrendered himself prisoner, not to expose his friends. All his papers were then seized, and he was conducted to the citadel of Strasburg, where he was confined with the Marquis de Thumery and the persons who had been found in his house. Of all these persons, who were eight in number, the Marquis and Colonel Grunstein were the only ones that belonged to the militant emigrants; the others were ecclesiastics and domestics.[2] They had therefore immediate proof of the falsity of the report both with regard to the presence of Dumouriez and the complicity of the duke with the conspiracy of Paris, of which there was no trace in his papers, and even of the military rank that he was said to hold with a view to the coming war, for he was living there as a private individual; and the assemblage of emigrants that were supposed to have grouped around him was purely imaginary.

But the death of the unfortunate young man had been resolved upon, and was the more inevitable that it was combined with a political calculation. As early as the 12th of March Bonaparte retired to Malmaison, where he both escaped solicitations that he was decided not to listen to, and was removed from the theatre of the crime, for he did not wish to appear personally in an act in which his will had been supreme. It is Murat, whom he had just named governor of Paris, Réal, the head of his police, and Savary, his man of execution, who take the most prominent part in a drama in which they were only his instruments.

[1] Report of citizen Charlot, chief of the 38th squadron of gendarmery.

[2] *Ibid.*

On the 15th of March he wrote to Réal to prepare everything in the château of Vincennes.[1] On the 17th he had the correspondence of the Duc d'Enghien in his hands; two days later he returned it to Réal, commanding him not to allow any discussion to take place upon the greater or lesser charges that his papers contained.[2] He knew that all these charges were reduced to a single one—to the crime of having served in the army of the emigrants, and being ready to serve in it again,—a crime that he had pardoned in so many thousands of men, infinitely less excusable than the heir of a family so cruelly tried by the Revolution; he knew that all the suspicions that had been raised against him were without foundation. The impudent story of Savary, relative to the confusion 'with the mysterious personage,' becomes at this point so unsustainable that his continuators are obliged to admit that Bonaparte was no longer under this false impression; but he then feared, they say, 'to expose himself to the contemptuous laugh of the Royalists.' A singular reason for sacrificing an innocent person! Bonaparte had, moreover, nothing of the kind to apprehend from a terrified party. He was no longer under the influence of either fear or illusion; he acted with due knowledge. On the 18th of March he received a despatch from M. de Massias, our minister at Baden, who certified 'that the conduct of the duke had always been innocent and moderate.' According to the received story, this despatch was intercepted by M. de Talleyrand; but such activity in a hatred without motives scarcely appears reconcilable with the careless character of this statesman. M. de Massias did more; he went to Strasburg, and informed the prefect that there was neither plot nor assemblage of emigrants in Ettenheim.[3] Are we to believe that M. Shée had, like Talleyrand, taken an oath to ruin the duke? The conduct and the intentions of the Duc d'Enghien were of very little consequence to Bonaparte; what he wanted was to get rid of him. Upon all these points his mind was so

[1] Bonaparte to Réal. [2] Bonaparte to Réal, March 19.

[3] *Lettre à M. de Bourrienne sur l'affaire du Duc d'Enghien*, by the Baron de Massias, 1829.

fully made up, that in the draft of the examination which he sent to Réal on the morning of the 20th of March (and more probably the evening of the 19th)[1] the grievance of complicity in the conspiracy is not even mentioned: he is no longer accused of anything more 'than of having borne arms against his country,' and collateral facts connected with this principal one; he merely asks him, in the last place, 'if he had any knowledge of the plot, and if, in case it succeeded, he was not to enter Alsace.' He takes no more pains to invoke false pretexts, he contents himself with a reason which is sufficient for condemning him to death, for this was all he wanted.

While preparations were being made for this tragic event, Bonaparte remained shut up in Malmaison, inaccessible to every one except his most intimate familiars. He recited to them, they say, verses from our most celebrated poets on the subject of clemency, in order to stop their supplications by giving utterance to sentiments that did not exist in his heart. Réal and Savary had continual interviews with him, and they arranged together the measures that were to be taken. As no one cared to fix his name to a dishonourable decree, the prince was to be tried by a commission composed of the colonels of the garrison of Paris, men of great devotion, and incapable of discerning the gravity of the act demanded of them. Réal was not to compromise himself by taking part in an examination that was only a form: his place was to be supplied by a captain reporter chosen by Murat. If the prisoner should ask to be allowed to see Bonaparte, no attention was to be paid to his demand.[2] The First Consul ordered that the sentence was *to be executed* immediately, a sinister expression, which clearly indicated the nature of that sentence. Notwithstanding all the lies that have been told about this incident of his life, there is no trace of a fact which proves that he experienced a

[1] Bonaparte to Réal, March 20: *supposed date.* Correspondence.

[2] Hullin and Savary both agree as to the truth of this order, and throw on each other the blame of having accepted it. This is of little consequence.

moment's hesitation; everything shows, on the contrary, that a murder was never more coldly committed. He has been represented as walking by himself for hours together in the avenues of Malmaison, restless, hesitating, and in an anxious state of mind. 'The proof of his agitation, it has been said, is in his inoccupation, *for he dictated scarcely a single letter during the whole week that he stayed at Malmaison, an unique instance of idleness in his life.*'[1] A glance at his correspondence from the 15th to the 23d of March suffices to show the incorrectness of this assertion; in this short space of time he dictated *twenty-seven* letters, some of them of unusual length, and relative to affairs of every kind. On the 20th of March alone, a day on which his agitation would have been at its height, he dictated as many as *seven*, and in this number we find a long one written to Soult, in which he speaks of nothing but the calibre of the bombs at Boulogne and Fort Rouge, the changes to be made in the platforms of the gunboats and pinnaces of the Batavian flotilla, and 'the bales of poisoned cotton which the English had vomited upon our coasts to infect the continent!'[2] An idea that would appear ridiculous under any other circumstances, and one which bespeaks a singularly darkened imagination, but not a mind stung by remorse.

The Duc d'Enghien reached Paris on the 20th of March, about eleven o'clock in the morning: he was detained at the gate till four o'clock in the afternoon, evidently for fresh orders from Malmaison. From thence he was conducted by the outer boulevards to the dungeon of Vincennes, where Bonaparte had placed as governor a confidential man, well worthy of the work over which he was to preside. It was that same Harel who had delivered up to him the innocent heads of Arena, Ceracchi, Topino Lebrun, and Demerville, for a crime of which he was the sole instigator and the sole perpetrator. The prince was then allowed to take some rest and refreshment. It has been discovered by a close inquiry that was afterward instituted upon this tragical event, that when the Duc d'Enghien arrived at

[1] Thiers. [2] Bonaparte to Soult, March 20, 1804.

Vincennes to be tried, his grave was already dug![1] Towards midnight he was awoke by Captain Dautancourt, who commenced a preliminary examination, as reporter of the commission. His replies were simple, noble, and modest, extremely clear, and perfectly truthful. He admitted that he had served all through the war, first as a volunteer, and afterwards as major of the vanguard of the Corps de Bourbon; that he received pay from England, and had nothing else to depend on. But he denied ever having known either Dumouriez or Pichegru. At the moment of signing the report, he wrote with his own hand upon the minute 'that he earnestly demanded to have a private interview with the First Consul. My name, my rank, my way of thinking, and the *horror of my situation*,' he added, 'make me hope that he will not refuse my demand.'[2] The choice of the hour alone indicated that his fate was decided. It is this request of a dying man, repeated a few minutes later before the commission, and not only foreseen but refused beforehand, as both Hullin and Savary attest, that is transformed, in the narrative of St. Helena, into a *letter*, which was kept back by Talleyrand, always thirsting for the blood of the Bourbons. 'The duke,' says Napoleon, 'wrote me a letter, *in which he offered me his services, and asked for the command of an army*, and that wretch of a Talleyrand did not give it to me till two days after the death of the prince!'[3] This is a twofold and shameful calumny, one against Talleyrand, the other against the Duc d'Enghien, and the latter is particularly odious: it is like a blow struck by the executioner on the face of his victim after he has beheaded him. The duke wrote no letter at all, much less such a discreditable one; but even if he had written it, either at Strasburg or at Vincennes, it would under no circumstances have been put into the hands of M. Talleyrand. It would have been sent with all the other papers direct to Malmaison, or, in case of

[1] *Lettre de M. Laporte Lalanne*, a member of the Committee of Inquiry. — Official Report of the Commissioners. Deposition of Bonnelet.

[2] Captain Dautancourt's report.

[3] O'Meara, Las Cases.

a very improbable confusion, to the Grand Judge, or Réal, who was charged with the superintendence of the police, or even to Murat, governor of Paris. It is not possible that it was addressed to M. Talleyrand, then minister of foreign affairs. Supposing him to have been the cruel monster that such a deed would denote, Talleyrand was too pliant, too cautious, to act thus towards a man like Bonaparte. This anecdote can only do harm to the memory of him who invented it, and to the intelligence of those who have sanctioned it.

At two o'clock in the morning,[1] the prince was brought before the military commission that General Hullin presided over. By the mournful and immovable countenances of these men, accustomed to passive obedience, it was easy to see that they had received their orders, and the condemnation of the accused was written upon their severe and dejected faces. Everything in them and about them declared the melancholy office they had accepted; the darkness which surrounded them, the mystery with which they proceeded, the silence and isolation of this nocturnal hour, the absence of witnesses, of the public, of a counsel that is not refused to the worst of murderers, of all the forms for protecting the accused,[2] the stealthy alacrity with which they hurried through their work, all these mute things have a terrible voice, which cries: 'These are not judges!' At the sight of their attitude, the prisoner divined the fate that awaited him. The noble youth stood erect, and replied with simple and manly dignity to the summary questions addressed to him by Hullin. They were put for the sake of form, and were merely an abridged repetition of those of the captain reporter: they state no other fact than that of having borne arms against the Republic, a fact that the prisoner did not deny. It is said that when Hullin asked him if he was connected with a plot against the life of the

[1] The hour is stated in the original report of the trial; but it was afterwards erased as telling against the judges.

[2] This violation of all judiciary forms has been pointed out in the eloquent memorial of Dupin: *Discussion des actes de la commission militaire, etc.*

First Consul, the blood of the Condés boiled within him, and he repelled the suspicion with a flush of anger and indignation; but the hard reproaches which twenty years later Savary placed in the mouth of Hullin are devoid of all probability, for the judges were more embarrassed than the accused. Hullin, who is a better authority, assures us, on the contrary, that he endeavoured to suggest to the prisoner a reticence that might save him, and that he rejected it with lofty resentment, as unworthy of himself. When the examination was terminated, the prince repeated his demand to have an interview with the First Consul. Then Savary, who had hitherto stood in silence before the fireplace and behind the president's chair, said: 'Now, this is my business!'[1] After remaining half an hour with closed doors, for the semblance of a deliberation, and the drawing up of a decree *signed in blank*, the prisoner was fetched. Harel appeared with a torch in his hand, he conducted them through a dark passage to a staircase, which led down to the ditch of the chateau.[2] Here they met a company of Savary's gendarmes, arrayed in order of battle, the prince's sentence was read to him by the side of the grave that had been dug beforehand, into which his body was about to be thrown. A lantern placed close to the grave threw its dismal light upon this scene of murder. The condemned man, then addressing the bystanders, asked if there was any one among them who would take charge of the last message of a dying man. An officer stepped out of the ranks; the duke confided to him a packet of hair to give to a beloved one. A few moments after he fell under the fire of the soldiers.[3]

Such was this ambush, one of the most cowardly that has ever been laid at any period. If we are to believe the excuses of those who took part in its execution, no one was responsible for it, and fatality alone committed the crime.

[1] Hullin: *Explications au sujet de la commission militaire chargée de juger le Duc d'Enghien.*

[2] Deposition of the brigadier Aufort.

[3] *Procès verbal d'enquête.* The anecdote of the lantern placed upon the Duc d'Enghien's heart is not true.

To all the unfortunate mistakes which were discovered too late in this event may be added a last and still more deplorable one, which would alone have ruined the prince. Réal, charged with questioning him, opened the order which entrusted him with this mission when it was too late, and he did not arrive at Vincennes till after the execution. But if Réal was appointed to examine him, how was it that Murat, who cursed the part he had to play, took upon himself to confide it to Captain Dautancourt? And if Réal hastened to Vincennes, how was it that he wrote two letters to Hullin in the morning, begging him to send a copy of the examination and sentence? Never have more miserable subterfuges been imagined, to screen the guilty from the just contempt of history. The same may be said of Savary's story with regard to the reception given him by Bonaparte when he went to Malmaison to render an account of his mission: 'He listened to me *with the greatest surprise!* . . . He fixed his lynx eyes upon me. There is, he said, something incomprehensible in this. . . . The sentence was not to be pronounced till Réal had *examined the prisoner upon a point which it was important for us to clear up.* . . . There is a crime that leads to nothing!' The point to be *cleared up* was still the question of identity of the duke with the mysterious personage, *bald, fair, of middle height.* When we think that such impudent inventions have been accepted by a whole generation, we are led to ask if falsehood has not in itself a savour and an attraction so irresistible for vulgar appetites that truth can no longer appear to them other than repulsive! No; in the catastrophe of Vincennes there was neither accident, nor confusion, nor mistake; everything in it was conceived, premeditated, and combined with artistic care, and any one must have let prejudice destroy common sense, who accepts the stories invented by the criminal himself. How could the man, whom we see in his correspondence so particular, so attentive to the smallest details, so penetrating and so inquisitive with regard to the most insignificant agents of the conspiracy, the man who dictated the questions to be asked, and directed all the proceedings against Querelle and the woman

Pocheton, suddenly became the sport of *quiproquos*, of heedlessness, and the tremendous mistakes which are attributed to him when the persons in question were a Bourbon or a Condé? How can we admit that a mind so clear-sighted, a character so self-willed and imperious, could in this critical circumstance have been merely a docile puppet in the hands of Talleyrand? No, in spite of falsifications and lies, in spite of a hypocrisy more odious than the crime itself, he cannot escape the responsibility of an act which he performed with the utmost calculation; the deed will remain his own before God and before men, and history will not even admit in his favour that division of ignominy which complicity creates for the benefit of the guilty, for in the murder of the Duc d'Enghien there was one principal author, and there were instruments, accomplices there were none.

The news of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien was not known in Paris till the evening of the 21st of March; it produced a most disastrous impression. It was, in fact, a revival of the terror, but the terror for the benefit of a single man, the terror without the fanaticism, without the publicity and broad daylight; for the whole of this ignoble tragedy, the arrest, the sentence, the execution, had all taken place in the night. Nevertheless, the public, deprived of all means of expressing their reprobation, were forced to keep silence, and the sensation was transient. Men are so inconsistent, even in hatred, that in less than three months after the murder those who had been the most indignant were petitioning the murderer for some place in his antechambers. There was only one protestation, that of Chateaubriand, who resigned his office of *chargé d'affaires* to the Republic of the Valais. Fourcroy received a concluding speech all ready prepared, which he hastened to deliver to the Legislative Body,[1] to dismiss this assembly. Bonaparte went himself to the Council of State, and indulged in one of those monologues, in which he seemed to attack an imaginary interlocutor, as if he felt the condemnation that was hidden under the general silence.

[1] Pelet de la Lozier.

'The people of Paris were a set of nincompoops; . . . they had always been the misfortune of France! . . . As for public opinion, its judgments were to be respected, but its caprices were to be despised. . . . Moreover, he had fifty thousand men to make the will of the nation respected!' He next entered into endless explanations which no one asked of him; then, as if irritated by the obstinate silence around, he hastily broke up the sitting. The newspapers had orders to say nothing. The *Moniteur* for that day and the day following, March 22, had a perfectly different character; it was full of mystery, gentleness, and contrition. On the 21st of March it published, on the first page, a letter from Pope Pius VII. '*to his very dear son in Jesus Christ, Napoleon Bonaparte*, relative to the Churches of Germany,' a precious testimony of affection to display to pious people in these difficult circumstances. It did not contain a word on the tragic event that was in every mouth. A short note, however, informed the public of the assemblage of emigrants upon the right side of the Rhine, 'crowded with these new legionaries.' Without naming the Duc d'Enghien, it said '*that a Bourbon* prince, *with his staff and bureaux*, had taken up his residence on this spot, from whence the movement was to be directed;' a shameful lie, invented to prepare public opinion, for the Government had received several days before the names of the eight perfectly inoffensive persons who surrounded the prince,[1] and it required singular audacity to transform them into a staff and bureaux for recruiting. The next day, March 22, the official journal again commenced with an article of the most edifying piety; it was more and more steeped in devotion. This time it is the Bishop of Coutances who vouches for the religious sentiments of the First Consul. In the middle of a solemn mass, demanded by the soldiers to thank God for the discovery of the conspiracy, the bishop proposed for their imitation the enthusiastic faith of the new Constantine: 'Soldiers,' he said, 'never forget that God whom the conqueror of Marengo adores, that God before whom we have

[1] These were Thumery, Colonel Grunstein, two abbés, a secretary, and three domestics.—*Rapport de Charlot.*

seen him in the Cathedral of Milan bow his head, crowned by victory!' etc. After this edifying introduction, and at the end of the news of the day, in the most obscure corner of the official paper, we find a document which seems placed there like some insignificant historical notice, without preface or reflections, or anything to attract the eye; it is the sentence of the Military Commission on *one* Louis-Antoine-Henri de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien. And as a climax to this perfidious and premeditated arrangement, the sentence itself is a forgery. The original decree, which Réal took to Malmaison, had appeared too brutal in its eloquent brevity, and had been lengthened by the addition of some judicial forms.

The excitement produced by the death of the Duc d'Enghien had scarcely begun to subside when, on the 6th of April, the public were informed that General Pichegru had been found strangled in his prison. 'On the 5th of April, towards eleven o'clock in the evening,' said the *Moniteur*, 'Pichegru took a hearty meal, and went to bed at midnight. After the servant who waited on him had retired, Pichegru drew from under his bed, where he had placed it, a black silk cravat, which he wound round his neck. A faggot, which he had put aside, now helped him in carrying out his project of suicide. He passed this stick through the two ends of his cravat which were fastened by a knot. He turned the little stick round near the glandular part of the neck as many times as was necessary to close the air-vessels; when his breath was nearly gone, he fastened the stick behind his ear and lay down on the same ear, so as to prevent the stick from getting loose. Pichegru, naturally stout, sanguine, choked by the food he had thus taken and the pressure he experienced, expired during the night.'

This account, as minute and particular as if it had been written by an ocular witness, was not calculated to prevent or dispel the suspicions which such an event was sure to give rise to. The author made the mistake of endeavouring to prove too much. No one, for instance, who knows anything of the agony and convulsions that accompany death by strangulation, could believe that Pichegru in his

last moments, when vitality survives conscience and will, did not involuntarily struggle, but remained perfectly still, *lying upon the ear to prevent the stick from getting loose*, according to the intention assigned to him with such imperturbable assurance by the writer of this strange report. Several other suspicious circumstances might be pointed out, both in the report of the surgeons appointed to examine the body and in the deposition of the keepers. The surgeons stated that Pichegru had 'a transversal scratch about six centimètres long upon his left cheek,'[1] and they attributed this to the rotatory movement of the stick, a very unlikely thing if the stick had been moved by the general himself. The scratch bears witness to the intervention of a foreign hand. Now let us hear what the keeper says who attended to Pichegru. He declares 'that in the morning he entered Pichegru's room to light his fire, *and that neither seeing him nor hearing him move, he was afraid some accident had happened;* that he went immediately to inform citizen Fauconnier, the porter of the Temple,'[2] without examining whether his supposition was right or not, and without remarking or mentioning the particulars of a scene that could not fail to strike the eye. And what is still more extraordinary is, that 'this vague report,' that Pichegru had not been heard to move, sufficed for the gaoler Fauconnier; he required no further information, but went straight to Colonel Ponsard and the magistrate Thuriot.[3]

The *Moniteur* reverted a second time to the death of Pichegru; it related 'that during the evening, Pichegru had asked for the works of Seneca, and that on opening the book at the page where the philosopher discusses the misfortunes of life and the easy passage into eternity, Pichegru had attempted to commit *suicide*.' Réal and his friends recounted on their side that Pichegru had borrowed this copy of Seneca from Réal several days before, and that he left it open at the page where the moralist says 'that he who conspires ought not to fear death.' Thus Pichegru,

[1] Report of the surgeons appointed by the Tribunal, etc.
[2] Deposition of the turnkey Popon.
[3] Deposition of Fauconnier.

wishing to destroy himself, took care to prevent any suspicion of a murder! In order to make known his intention of committing suicide, he thought of asking for a copy of Seneca, instead of writing a few words in his will; he chose this circuitous and indirect means, this theatrical means, so contrary to his character; he wished to prepare this justification of his most mortal enemy! It must be acknowledged that there is too much artifice and arrangement here, and this last trait goes beyond all measure, for it is calculated to give rise to doubts rather than to dispel them. The same may be said of the first exclamation, which, according to Savary, escaped Réal when he was informed of the event: 'Well! although nothing can be clearer than this suicide, it will always be said that, not being able to convict him, we strangled him.'[1]

Such was in reality the universal impression when the public first heard of this death, and all the circumstances of the event were still engraven on their minds. They went so far as to name the executioners,—they were those Mamelukes whom Bonaparte had brought home with him from the East, and by whom he was surrounded,—fit agents, in fact, for this oriental execution. The prisoners related that during the night they had heard the noise of a struggle in Pichegru's dungeon.[2] Savary asserts that many years later an official gentleman who was his friend spoke to him of Pichegru's murder 'as a fact of which there was no doubt.' Baron de Dalberg, who then represented Baden at Paris, expressed the general feeling of the diplomatic body, when he announced to his government 'that Pichegru had been chosen as a victim. The history of the Roman emperors, the Lower Empire,' he added, 'this is the picture of this country and of this reign;'[3] a comparison so much the more just, that at this time, and as if he had wished to confirm the statement, Bonaparte, irritated at the murmurs of the salons of Paris, caused an article to be published in all the newspapers 'upon the causes that had determined Constantine *to form a new*

[1] *Mémoires de Savary.* [2] Fauche Borel.
[3] Despatch of April 11, 1804.

capital.' He had more than once openly announced his intention, whether real or not, of transporting the capital to Lyons, and he chose this moment to publish a threat that was evidently aimed at the Parisians.

Since that period, time, which so weakens all impressions, has almost obliterated the suspicions to which the death of Pichegru gave rise; but if we go back to the epoch, and examine with calm attention all the circumstances of the event, the motives for suspicion remain intact. Independent of the facts which we have stated, Pichegru's death suggests a twofold question: Was Bonaparte *capable* of employing such means to rid himself of Pichegru? The murder of the Duc d'Enghien, victim infinitely more pure, more innocent, and more interesting than Pichegru, and who had been sacrificed a fortnight before, relieves us from replying to this question. It may next be asked if he had an *interest* in doing so? Pichegru had constantly declared in his examinations that he would only answer before the Tribunal; after he discovered that he had been the dupe of Réal, he spoke in very bitter terms of the First Consul; it was known that he had been entrusted with more than one secret concerning General Bonaparte, both before and after the 18th Fructidor; every one was aware of his resolute and energetic character, and they also knew that he was driven to extremities, and was ready to rend every veil. It certainly did not require more to decide an all-powerful enemy, in whose eyes the life of a man did not count for more than that of a fly. But had not the First Consul, it is often asked, a much greater interest in getting rid of Moreau, and in that case why strike Pichegru? The reply is clear. Pichegru was so compromised that he had no longer anything to care or to hope for; he could only raise himself in public opinion by openly attacking the tyranny of Bonaparte; Moreau, on the other hand, was in a situation in which he could not even hint blame on the Consul's policy without exposing himself to a suspicion of personal hostility; there were only very light charges against him, and he would have given them weight if he had appeared in the trial as a rival, or

even as an opponent; he had to confine himself strictly to the discussion of the facts brought against him. These were sufficient reasons for not fearing from him what they dreaded from Pichegru; and, moreover, who would have believed that Moreau, against whom they had no proof, would have so far given way to despondency as to commit suicide! Such a determination could only be explained by a desperate situation. Nor is this all. Pichegru was discredited, he no longer inspired any interest except with the emigrants, he could be put out of the way without danger; Moreau was esteemed even by his enemies, he was adored by his former soldiers, he had numerous partisans among the chiefs of the army, and even in the Senate, and if such a man had been strangled in his prison, the Consular Government would not have gone long unpunished. The result of all these considerations is, that if the murder of Pichegru cannot be given as a fact rigorously proved, it is at any rate not improbable. The mystery will never perhaps be cleared up, and accusation would be rash, but suspicion will remain legitimate.

CHAPTER XI

THE EMPIRE—THE TRIAL AND PROSCRIPTION OF MOREAU

If the motive for the facilities and encouragements of every kind that the Government had given to a conspiracy, which without them would probably never have had a beginning, appeared at all doubtful to the historian, the shameless eagerness which they displayed in obtaining the results they were anticipating from their dark combination would alone suffice to throw a clear light upon the intentions of those who favoured it. The art with which they profited by the plot clearly explains their co-operation in it. There were two blows premeditated at the same time, two games played for the same stakes, two enterprises having the same end in view. This end, so ardently and so subtly pursued, was not only the ruin of Moreau and all his friends, who were implicated in his disgrace, it was not merely the death of Pichegru, of Georges, and of the Duc d'Enghien, the violent suppression of all the energetic elements that remained among the Royalist party,—it was more; it was the crowning of those hopes, so long deferred, which had first been put forth in Fontanes' pamphlet, of which Ceracchi's conspiracy had been the skilfully-prepared pretext, which had miscarried at the time of the Consulate for life owing to Bonaparte's obstinate dissimulation; it was the dream of which he would not wait for the realisation of the somewhat doubtful triumphs of his expedition against England; in a word, it was the Empire. The disturbance produced by the late events, the shock received by so many weak heads, always ready to go from one extreme to the other, the proverbial protestations of devotion from all official

bodies and all the administrative assemblies, on account of the danger from which the First Consul was said to have escaped, facilitated the introduction of the object of his desires under the form of an address or petition, and the question, once introduced, was settled beforehand.

The expression, *Empire of the West, Empire of the Gauls*, had been several times pronounced by zealous men, who were anxious to push themselves forward, and were sure of pleasing their master by using words that were uppermost in his mind. But these expressions had found no echo, they had been received by the public with indifference. As early as the rupture of the peace of Amiens, Fox wrote to his nephew that the report was current that Bonaparte was going to be proclaimed *Emperor of the Gauls*.[1] The announcement was premature, but the event had been resolved upon. He required an occasion first; he had one now; to choose, in order to effect this transformation, the failure of a plot was a proceeding that had become common ever since it had been pointed out by Machiavel. Even while the Duc d'Enghien was being shot at Vincennes, addresses, signed by officials, by electoral councils and municipal councils, were presented to Bonaparte, beseeching him to put an end to the uneasiness of the nation, and to consolidate the institutions by re-establishing hereditary right. The signal had been given in a distant province, by an obscure college, over which Ganteaume presided. This request was by no means an expression of the general sentiment,—it was the Government which addressed itself by the hand of its creatures. France was passive and subdued; she had no longer either will or opinion, she was credulous and ignorant, and had scarcely any means of knowing the truth as to the circumstances which had just occurred, and she allowed herself to be led with resignation into the track which the Government wished her to follow. Never was a revolution less spontaneous, less called for by the wishes of the public; never was a crisis provoked with more contempt for the rights of the people; never have common sense and truth

[1] Memorials and Correspondence, published by Lord Russell, vol. iii.

been more audaciously insulted than by asserting that the Empire was desired by the nation. Even among those about Bonaparte, the most enlightened men were opposed to the new change; they were dismayed by an ambition which seemed to become more insatiable in proportion as they endeavoured to satisfy it. This was the opinion of Cambacérès himself, who had proposed the Consulate for life, but who was hostile to the present project, not from any scruples or on principle, but from prudent care and fear for the future. Bonaparte had for him only those who speculated on the favours of a new *régime*. At their head was Fouché, weary of his long inactivity, and impatient to recover his place in the Government. Fouché was, in the absence of Cambacérès, the principal instrument in this transformation,—a workman worthy of such a task. The services which he rendered here were, moreover, only the continuation of those he had rendered in the plot woven against Moreau. He displayed in it all his experience of political *roué*, and all his science of intrigue. The murder of the Duc d'Enghien produced a movement of horror, but did not stop the organised manifestations, in which public opinion counted for nothing. Very soon there only remained the great bodies of the State, who had not taken part in them; these were more docile than all the others, and only waited for an order to obey.

A very simple means was found for engaging the Senate. In order to create a diversion from the unfortunate impression produced in Europe by the violation of the Germanic territory, the First Consul made the Grand Judge draw up a report upon the intrigues of Drake and Spencer Smith in Germany, and the information of Méhée and Captain Rosey, whose dupes they had been. To this report was joined, as a convincing proof, the correspondence of these diplomatic agents with the two instigators, and, in order to give more weight to such insignificant letters, they were followed by a violent and declamatory circular, which Talleyrand addressed to all the Courts of Europe, once more denouncing the abominable intrigues of the British Cabinet. It was drawing a double advantage from this poor production to com-

municate it to the Senate under the present circumstances. The commission named by this assembly to examine the report, not knowing what was required of them, merely proposed a reply containing the obligatory congratulations ; but Fouché had received orders to enlighten the Senate. Bonaparte considered that it was useless to repeat the comedy of the Consulate for life, for he had been the first to suffer in it ; he therefore openly explained his intentions. Fouché informed the senators of a desire that was for them an order. He had no difficulty in convincing them of the advantage the Senate would derive from anticipating a wish to which they could offer no obstacle ; the reply was at once changed into an invitation to seize the crown. On the 27th of March, when the corpse of the victim of Vincennes was scarcely cold, and while the impression was still fresh in all minds, the most eminent personages of the State, in the midst of universal stupor, hastened to offer the murderer the reward of his crime. 'You are founding,' they said, 'a new era, but you ought to make it last for ever ; splendour is nothing without duration. Do not delay, great man, to accomplish your work, by rendering it immortal like your glory. You have rescued us from the chaos of the past, you make us bless the benefits of the present, guarantee for us the future.'[1]

Bonaparte listened to the wish of the senators with calm gravity, but he thought it right to display the astonishment of a man taken by surprise. He asked to be allowed to reflect, before he replied to a proposition which had come from himself alone. What he really wanted was to gain time, which was indispensable in order to prepare men's minds for a transformation of which no one felt the necessity. While therefore he caused his orators in the Council of State to debate the comparative advantages of the elective and hereditary systems, while he affected with certain personages to hesitate between an empire and a *stadtholderate*,[2] he urged his prefects to hasten the demonstrations from all the assemblies placed under their dependence ; he charged his ambassadors to negotiate the recog-

[1] Address of the Senate. [2] Miot de Mélito.

nition of his new title with foreign courts, particularly with Prussia and Austria; he discussed with his brothers, Joseph and Louis, sometimes the eventuality of a divorce, sometimes the way in which the hereditary succession should be arranged; he endeavoured to make Louis accept the idea of an adoption from which he shrank with horror, saying that it would dishonour him, and confirm the scandalous reports that had been spread at the birth of his first son; lastly, he wrote to his generals[1] to *consult* the army, taking care, however, only to address himself to those who were capable of understanding the meaning of the act. This last formality was the more decisive that the wishes of the soldiers had been previously made use of as a menace to the members of the Senate, of the Legislative Body, and of the Tribunate. They had been privately told 'that the army was impatient, that its chiefs feared they would soon be unable any longer to contain it, that it was therefore necessary to hasten matters, if they did not wish to see a revolution carried by military force, which ought to be achieved by the civil powers!' The army was then the lever which worked the whole State. It is easy to understand the result of this general movement given to a machine so well organised for despotism; once thrown in the track, the Empire followed a regular and foreseen course, which nothing could henceforth stop, except some extraordinary hazard.

Europe, being less disciplined, was less complaisant. We have seen how Bonaparte, after the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, had succeeded in exasperating against us, by his unreasonable exigencies, the states that were most disposed to be friendly, and that at a time when the war upon which we had just entered imposed upon us more than ever the duty of conciliating them. We have seen him alienating by his depredations the hearts of our allies, grinding down dependent nations, humiliating vanquished Austria, irritating Russia because he could not induce her to take part against England, and rejecting with blind infatuation the hand that Prussia extended, for a clause which she refused to agree to. A complete isolation was the

[1] Letter to Soult, April 14, 1804.

natural consequence of this policy. The feeling of hostility which the enigmatical attitude of the Powers revealed would alone have sufficed to make the First Consul shrink from such a deed as the seizure of the Duc d'Enghien, in time of peace, upon the Germanic territory, if he had possessed the political genius that has been attributed to him. If in reality he did not foresee the inevitable consequences of such an event in the unfriendly disposition of Europe, he must have been absolutely devoid of that tact and soundness of judgment without which no man is a great politician; if he did foresee them, and if, according to an expression which more than once fell from his lips, he wished to 'vanquish England by fighting Europe,' if he preferred his vengeance to the peace of the world, if he coldly committed this crime with a knowledge of the calamities that it would draw upon this country, he was nothing more than an insensate madman, fit to be outlawed from the human race.

The impression produced upon the European powers by the seizure and murder of the Duc d'Enghien was one of unanimous indignation, but they were not all in a position to show it. Prussia only displayed her discontent by a profound silence; but she immediately allied herself to Russia by a secret treaty.[1] The two Powers engaged to declare war to us 'on the first encroachment by the French Government upon the states of the North.' The increase of our troops in Hanover would alone suffice to give them the right to claim the *casus fœderis*. Austria, isolated at that time in consequence of the division of the Germanic indemnities, maintained the timid attitude that prudence enjoined on her, and continued to treat us with cold respect. M. de Cobentzel had even the weakness to tell our ambassador Champigny, though only in a private conversation, 'that his master understood the necessities of politics,' which was construed at Paris into an adhesion of the Austrian Cabinet. The little German courts, terrified, appeared to be ignorant of the event. Russia alone emphatically protested. This power had on this occasion the honour of expressing the opinion of the whole world.

[1] Signed May 24, 1804.

As soon as the news reached Saint Petersburg, Alexander caused all his court to go into mourning. A few days later, a severe and haughty note was addressed to the French Cabinet, to state the meaning of this manifestation.[1] After having expressed the 'grief and astonishment' that the event at Ettenheim had caused the emperor, the note pointed out the infringement of the rights of nations committed by the violation of a neutral territory, and announced that the Russian Government intended to bring the affair before the Germanic Diet. The little court of Sweden courageously followed the example of Russia. The First Consul's reply was soon given; it is memorable by the mischief it did us. If there had been nothing to do but to reply by a bitter affront to complaints that were but too just, this reply would have fully attained its end; but if it was necessary to avoid an imminent rupture by skilful temporisations, to palliate, by finding extenuating circumstances, facts that will for ever be regretted, to leave, in a word, a door open to conciliation, the note of the French Cabinet was as fatal as it was unreasonable. 'The complaint now raised by Russia,' it said, 'leads us to ask whether, when England was meditating the assassination of Paul I., if she had been informed that the conspirators were assembled a league from her frontier, she would not have hastened to seize them?'

This allusion to the impunity enjoyed by the murderers of Paul I. was in reality a cutting reply, but it sacrificed the interests of our policy to a private satisfaction, and it made an irreparable wound in the heart of the young sovereign, for Alexander had submitted to his elevation as a misfortune, and had profited by the murder without having been an accomplice. The arguments that he joined to this insulting declaration, to prove that, since the Germanic powers were satisfied, Russia had no right to complain, were, moreover, superfluous, for when a blow is struck it is useless to reason. Supposing that the very questionable maxim, of *silence giving consent*, were applicable in this case, there was a more general interest above German interests; there was public European right; and if the German governments were too

[1] Note of April 30.

weak to venture to invoke it, was not this a reason why the stronger states should defend the common independence? Bonaparte wrote at the same time to Talleyrand, to recall our ambassador from Saint Petersburg, and only leave there a *chargé-d'affaires;* he dictated to him the language he was to hold with this court: '*I do not wish for war*,' he said, '*but I do not fear it with any one.* . . . It is enough to swallow the insults of England upon the sea, without being obliged to swallow the impertinence of Russia. . . . All Europe,' he added, 'will do me this justice, *that I do not intermeddle in the internal affairs of any state;* and I will suffer no interference in France.'[1] It has been seen by the account of our relations with Spain, with Switzerland, with Holland, with Italy, and even with England, how Bonaparte abstained 'from intermeddling in the internal affairs of a state.' At this very moment he had just forced the Court of Rome to deliver up to him, by the most cowardly complaisance, and in contempt of all rights, the emigrant Vernègues, a naturalised Russian, whom he had wished to implicate in the conspiracy of Georges. But a short time after, embarrassed by his capture, he secretly favoured his escape, when he perceived that his threats against Russia had produced a contrary effect in Europe to that which he had expected.

This effect was more and more unfavourable as the whole of the late events became better known. The report relative to the intrigues of Drake, so ostentatiously published in order to divert the indignation produced by the catastrophe of Vincennes, and turn it against England, had completely failed in its end, in spite of the strong expressions with which Talleyrand had seasoned his circular to the members of the diplomatic bodies. What was in reality the crime of Drake and Spencer Smith? That of having received the overtures of a police agent, who promised to abstract from the First Consul's cabinet a portfolio containing State secrets; of having tried to form a connection with an imaginary royalist committee. But what they had fruitlessly attempted to do, in a country with which their

[1] Bonaparte to Talleyrand, May 13, 1804.

government was at war, Bonaparte had often successfully done in countries with which he was at peace. His whole policy had frequently consisted in practices of this kind, but his intrigues were a thousand times more odious, because they were carried on against allies or feeble governments, and because to ruse he added violence. England had, moreover, only borrowed his favourite method, by exciting enemies against him in France, at a time when, in order to make up for the failure of his attempt at insurrection in Ireland, he was forming Irish regiments at Boulogne for a fresh rising. If he did no more, it was because he could not; it was because with all his promises to deliver the English from their aristocracy, and to bring them the benefits of equality, he would not have obtained the adhesion in England of the most miserable beggars.

When therefore Talleyrand exclaimed with feigned indignation in his manifesto: 'Such a *prostitution* will astonish and afflict Europe as an unheard-of crime, and one which until the present moment the most perverse government had not dared to attempt'—these words fell back with their whole weight upon him who had dictated them. Lord Hawkesbury experienced no embarrassment in clearing his Government from the accusations of the French Cabinet. In denying with contempt all participation in a plan of assassination, in stigmatising this accusation as a means 'of diverting the attention of Europe from the contemplation of the sanguinary deed which had recently been perpetrated by the direct order of the First Consul,' he confined himself to the strict truth. And in plainly asserting his right and his intention 'to avail himself of all discontents that existed in the country with which they were at war,'[1] he had in the eyes of all Europe the advantage of frankness and dignity over the French Government.

Nearly a month had elapsed since the Senate had requested Bonaparte to finish his work, and to consolidate our institutions by the re-establishment of the throne. During this time he had had leisure to terminate his

[1] Lord Hawkesbury's note, April 30, 1804. *Annual Register*, State papers.

reflections, that is to say, to make sure of the recognition of Prussia and Austria, the disposition of his soldiers, and the inexhaustible docility of the nation. The immense crowd of officials had rushed with their accustomed zeal into the road that had been opened for them; the chiefs of the army had eagerly embraced a means of advancement more rapid and less dangerous than that of battle; and throughout the whole of the month of April France had resounded with protestations of official devotion and wishes for the Empire.

As for this singular nation, desperate mixture of inconsistency and grandeur, of weakness and generosity, still under the influence of their recent indignation, divided for an instant between idolatry and horror, but too demoralised and too sceptical to have a will, they seemed no longer able to resist the fascination of crime and glory; they resigned themselves with a sort of intoxication, like the degraded women who show a preference for those that despise and crush them. The tribune Curée, a man chosen exactly for his obscurity, in order to leave to the decrees of destiny their whole weight, presented a motion in the Tribunate, demanding the establishment of the Empire in favour of Napoleon Bonaparte and his family. Then the First Consul decided on replying to the address of the Senators.

'Your address,' he said, 'has never ceased to be present to my thoughts; it has been the object of my most constant meditation. You have judged the hereditary power of the supreme magistracy necessary to shelter the French people from the plots of our enemies, and from the agitations which arise from rival ambitions. It even appears to you that many of our institutions ought to be improved, in order to secure for ever the *triumph of equality and public liberty*, and to afford to the nation and the Government the double guarantee of which they stand in need. . . . I have felt more and more that the counsels of your wisdom and experience were necessary to enable me to fix my ideas. I request you then to make known to me the whole of your thoughts. . . . I desire that we may be able to say to the

French people on the 14th of July of the present year :— Fifteen years have passed since, by a spontaneous movement, you ran to arms, you acquired liberty, equality, and glory. These first blessings of nations are now secured to you for ever, they are sheltered from every tempest, they are preserved to you and to your children !' (April 25th).

As on the day after the 18th Brumaire, it was under the protection of the grand souvenirs of '89 that this new *coup-d'état* was placed, which was destined to efface the last vestige of public liberties. The greater the force of him who had recourse to such artifices, the more odious was his hypocrisy.

It would be impossible to deny, moreover, that this cynical charlatanism, systematically employed in the smallest things, powerfully contributed to maintain the power of Bonaparte. He knew well that enlightened men were not the dupes of such gross lies, but the masses, who are led with words, and who are insensible to the existence of political guarantees, incessantly finding in official speeches the most popular formulas of the Revolution, were easily persuaded of the sincerity of a language of which they were not competent to judge. In the eyes of these masses the Revolution was the possession of national property ; it was advancement in the army, admissibility to all offices, and the abolition of aristocratic privileges. All these benefits Bonaparte had insured them, and the greater number required nothing more to follow a man blindly whom they had no means of unmasking, and who had moreover the art of satisfying some of the dearest appetites of the democracy, if not its higher instincts. This was the great secret of his surprising popularity.

The First Consul's speech had just opened the lists to the ambitious, to courtiers, to speculators, and to placemen. All vied with each other in pushing forward, and the timid followed from fear of seeing their want of eagerness denounced as a conspiracy. In the Tribunate, in the sitting of April 30th, Curée developed his motion amid the applause of the Assembly. Siméon, anxious to cause his royalist antecedents and his temporary opposition to be

forgotten, supported it with enthusiasm. He represented the Empire as Hercules strangling the serpents which had crept into his cradle. He compared Bonaparte to Hugh Capet and to Charlemagne. He recalled the first decree which had overthrown the Stuarts. The orators who followed strove to surpass him by the temerity of their flatteries. This was emulation in servility, as it has sometimes been seen in independence. Duveyrier demanded that violence should be done 'to the virtuous scruples and touching reserve of Bonaparte . . . he alone resists—he hesitates—has he the right to do so?' 'Bonaparte is compared to Charlemagne,' exclaimed Carrion de Nisas, with a sort of indignation: 'God forbid that I should depreciate that great conqueror and legislator; but Charlemagne owed half his force and grandeur to the swords of Charles Martel and Pépin. Bonaparte owes everything to himself, and that is why he pleases us and suits us.'

In the midst of this scene of abject adulation one man rose, and showed that he had neither forgotten his own antecedents nor the dignity of his country. This was Carnot, the representative of a prouder generation, whose dearest dream was about to vanish,—a man who, in spite of many failings, was still worthy to plead in favour of the great cause which perished at that instant. Carnot had blindly served the fortunes of Bonaparte, he alone had defended him against the just suspicions of the Directory, when the conduct of the young general in Italy clearly betrayed an unbridled ambition; since that period, although he had been rewarded by the blackest ingratitude, he had placed his republican popularity and old reputation for integrity at the service of the 18th Brumaire, by accepting the ministry of war. Even later, he had consented to replace one of the *éliminés* of the Tribunate. These were acts which cast an imputation both on his character and his intelligence; he fully atoned for them by his honourable and firm attitude on this melancholy day, and his tardy opposition was so much the more meritorious, because it deprived him of all the fruits of his former complaisance. It was, moreover, to these services that he owed the honour

of being able to make a patriotic protestation, heard in the midst of the silence imposed on all those whose speeches would have enlightened France. He was, however, obliged to confine himself to proving, in a cold methodical speech, that nothing in the present situation necessitated the proposed change, and that absolute power had never been an element of stability. An expressive sentence in this speech revealed the depth of the illusions which Carnot had nourished: '*At length*,' he said, '*is unveiled the end of so many preliminary measures!*' He has required all this to make him recognise that the 18th Brumaire had prepared the way for the monarchy, and that Bonaparte had never ceased to pursue in it the goal of his ambition. It was only at the time of the Consulate for life that he had begun to open his eyes. If a man, so well situated for observing events, was duped by the shameless denial which the First Consul gave to those who denounced his projects, how can we be astonished at their success with the lower classes? Another passage, striking in its brevity, deserves to be mentioned: 'You say,' he exclaimed, 'that Bonaparte has saved his country, that he has restored public liberty; is it a reward, then, to offer him the sacrifice of this same liberty?'

Carnot was scarcely listened to by an assembly carried away by the frenzy of adulation, and impatient to rush into servitude. A whole army of orators rose to answer Carnot. When they had all had an opportunity of putting themselves forward and displaying their zeal, the Tribunate voted the motion of Curée with enthusiasm. The vote was immediately communicated to the Senate, who, being cooler because they had less to gain by the change, endeavoured to get their acquiescence purchased by some new favours, as if they could impose conditions upon a man on whom they depended for everything. The memorial of the senators, which accompanied the offer of the throne, pointed out the necessity of surrounding the new monarchy with firm institutions; it claimed more liberty for the citizens, more independence for the public powers. The Senate especially could not dispense with the guarantee of hereditary succes-

sion; they asked to have a veto upon acts or laws that were contrary to the spirit of the institutions; they demanded to be invested with the right of interpreting the Senatus Consulta which they drew up, and they wished to be specially charged with watching over the liberty of the press and of the person. There is no doubt that in expressing these wishes, notwithstanding their self-interested motives, the senators were logical, and that their language was consistent with the spirit of great monarchical institutions. Such institutions can in reality only last so long as they bear in themselves a renovating principle, necessary for their power of preservation; but they strangely mistook the character of a man who never suffered any influence beyond his own. If Bonaparte took this last step, it was not to share his power, for the sake of an indefinite consolidation for which he cared very little, but to render it more absolute and more irresistible. He expressed his indignation in a Council of State at the insatiable avidity of the senators, and pointed out the danger of their ambition. 'The senators, if they were allowed, would go so far as to absorb the Legislative Body, and, who knows? perhaps they would even recall the Bourbons! They wanted to make laws, to judge, and to govern. Such a union of powers would be *monstrous;* he would not suffer it!'[1]

But these powers, according to him so monstrous in an Assembly, seemed quite natural when concentrated in the hands of a single man. He took no account of these ridiculous counsels, and a few days later Cambacérès brought the senators a list, ready drawn up, of the improvements which were supposed to have been suggested by themselves. The Senate immediately converted them into a Senatus Consultum. These changes were disapproved of, both by him who proposed them and by those who had to vote them; but they were no longer in a position to oppose the will of the man who enjoined them. The imperial dignity was conferred upon Napoleon Bonaparte and his descendants; in default of an heir, natural or adoptive, it was to fall to his brothers, Joseph and Louis, to the exclusion

[1] Thibaudeau. Pelet de la Lozère.

of Lucien and Jerome, who, by marrying contrary to his wishes, had incurred the displeasure of the new sovereign. To grand dignitaries, whose names were partly borrowed from the Germanic Empire, partly from the ancient *régime*, were added the great officers, indispensable ornament of a court that was in reality wholly military. The Senate saw the number of its members increased, but the only fresh function they received was the right to form two commissions, one called the senatorial commission for *personal liberty*, the other the senatorial commission for *the liberty of the press*. After three successive appeals of these commissions to the minister, the Senate had the right to declare 'that there were strong presumptions that these liberties had been violated.'[1] A solemn sinecure, a prerogative devoid of meaning, as long as this assembly remained in the dependent situation which had been created for it by the Consulate for life, and could only exercise the rights, so important in appearance, which had been confided to it at that period, *upon the initiative of the Government*. The Legislative Body also acquired the right of speech, but only *in secret committee*, and *its discussions could neither be divulged nor printed*;[2] on the other hand, the Tribunate was more and more subdivided and annulled. In no case could they discuss laws in a *general assembly*. Finally, a high court was instituted to take cognisance of crimes committed by members of the Imperial family, ministers, and grand dignitaries, of abuses and betrayals of trust committed by officials and administrators of every order, etc. It was armed with the most magnificent and formidable prerogatives, but it was only there for form, and never met. Thus the phantoms of the institutions created by the constitution of the Year VIII disappeared. Bonaparte would not even suffer these forms without reality; he only left in their place words, which were about to be forgotten in their turn. In accomplishing this last revolution, he not only did violence to the genius of his time, he wronged his own intelligence, and insulted the character of

[1] Senatus Consultum of May 18, 1804, title viii.
[2] Title x.

the French nation; for even if France was at that epoch no longer either worthy or capable of being free, it could at least be said of her what old Galba said to Piso of the Roman people: '*Imperaturus es hominibus, qui nec totam servitutem pati possunt, nec totam libertatem.*'

After hastily voting these changes on the report of Lacépède, the worthy bard of creeping things, the senators hurried off to Saint Cloud, to offer their homage to the new emperor. The regicide Cambacérès first saluted him in the name of majesty; he recalled in hyperbolical terms the services he had rendered; victory brought back to our standards, economy established in the public expenditure, the altars restored, and the fury of parties calmed. In conferring the imperial dignity on Bonaparte, the nation only paid a tribute to its own dignity. 'I accept,' replied Bonaparte, '*the title which you believe to be useful to the glory of the nation.* I hope that France will never repent of the honours with which she endows my family. At all events, *my spirit will no longer be with my posterity* on that day when they shall cease to merit the love and confidence of the great nation!'

This mystical language, in which Napoleon represented *his spirit* as hovering over his successors, was not that of a sovereign, but of a man who was trying to be a demigod. He immediately assumed his title, without waiting for the sanction of a popular vote, a derisive ceremony, which he estimated at its real value in treating it with this open contempt. Meanwhile, a group of senators and officers, accompanied with trumpets and kettledrums, paraded the streets of Paris, proclaiming the new *régime* to an indifferent or astonished population. They published the list of new dignities, favours, and honorary distinctions, with which the new throne was to be surrounded. Cambacérès and Lebrun, the two outgoing consuls, were to receive the grotesque titles of *arch-chancellor* and *arch-treasurer;* they had henceforth the right to be styled *most serene highnesses!* The emperor's two brothers, Joseph and Louis, who, by their docility and honest insignificance, had been admitted to the hereditary succession, were to be, one *grand elector*, and

the other *grand constable;* they were to have the titles of *Imperial highnesses;* besides them were enthroned *the princesses*, their sisters, far removed from the time when the Jacobin Fréron was an unhoped-for suitor; and above them was *Madame mère*, that curious figure of incredulity, who never regarded her own fortune otherwise than an unreal phantasmagoria, and went through the Empire saving her income for bad days![1] The ministers had the right to the title of *excellency.* Talleyrand, too clever and too shrewd to be favoured, was punished for all his past complaisance by the office of *grand chamberlain*, sign and chastisement for his courtiership. Other offices of the court were destined to enhance the splendour of the throne: there were ladies of honour, ladies of the bed-chamber, pages; there was a grand almoner, a grand marshal of the palace, a grand equerry, a grand huntsman, a grand master of the ceremonies, for the need of lavishing grandeur in words is never more felt than when there is littleness in the things. But it was in vain that all these men, from the master to the valet, disguised themselves in purple and livery; everything about them looked copied and parodied, there were the tinsel and varnish of a theatrical representation, or a scene in a carnival; it could not be forgotten that these upstarts, Jacobins, and terrorists, these regicides so strangely travestied into gentlemen of the court, had gained their power, influence, and wealth, by declaiming and fighting against these very titles, dignities, and privileges, which they had seized on with such shamelessness; it could not be forgotten that their hands were still stained with the blood of their predecessors in office, that they had enriched themselves with their spoils, that the world had resounded with their oaths against aristocracy and royalty; it could not be forgotten that these nobles, bought by money, and become the humble courtiers of their ancient proscribers, detested from the bottom of their hearts a usurpation on which they seemed to wish to avenge themselves by imposing on it all the ridicule of a superannuated etiquette; neither time, nor tradition, nor popular superstition, gave their prestige to

[1] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot.*

this collection of the renegades of every *régime*, and it is asking too much of History to expect her to take so contemptible a buffoonery seriously.

The only original creation of the new *régime* was the institution of marshals, the rational foundation of an order of things which was based solely upon military force. These great commands, brought into existence by a system of conquests, and only maintained by it, were not very tranquillising for Europe. They belonged of right to the lieutenants and companions in arms of Bonaparte,—Murat, Berthier, Masséna, Lannes, Soult, Brune, Ney, Augereau, Moncey, Mortier, Davoust, Jourdan. Those who were no longer fit for active service, like Kellermann, Pérignon, Lefebvre, and Serurier, received the title of honorary marshals. Bernadotte, who, like Lafayette himself,[1] had been very near sharing Moreau's fate (for Bonaparte had wanted to take advantage of the conspiracy to get rid of all his enemies at once), was also made a marshal instead of being sent to prison, escaping, thanks to Joseph's friendship, a misfortune from which all his dexterity would not have sufficed to preserve him, without his relationship to the emperor. Of all the friends and lieutenants of Moreau, not a single one figured upon the list of marshals, to represent the noble army of the Rhine. Many of them lay in their graves on the hills of Saint Domingo. Richepanse had died obscurely in Guadaloupe. Of the survivors, Decaen was in the Indies, Dessolles, Gouvion Saint-Cyr, and Macdonald, were to serve as subalterns, in spite of their superiority in intelligence and instruction over the greater number of the marshals; Sainte-Suzanne was buried in the Senate; and the most illustrious of all, Lecourbe, an incomparable general, the right hand of Masséna at Zurich, and of Moreau in the double campaign of 1800, was going to expiate in obscurity and the oblivion of a final retreat the crime of his faithful and courageous friendship for his former brother in arms.

While the new court, intoxicated with its triumph, gorged with riches and honours, was displaying in brilliant *fêtes* all

[1] *Mémoires de Lafayette.*

the luxury, if not all the elegance of ancient monarchical state, General Moreau, after a long and painful delay, was at length called to appear before his judges. The trial opened on the 28th of May 1804, before a public composed of all men whom the spectacle of unmerited misfortune could still move. Among the auditory the old soldiers of the Rhine were seen side by side with the most illustrious members of the bar of Paris; vanquished liberals, the political friends of Moreau, beside his ancient brothers in arms, all suspected or odious to Bonaparte. The union of so much misfortune and such unheard-of success could not fail to strike every mind; never was a contrast greater; and when the man celebrated for so many great and glorious actions took his seat on the bench of criminals tears rushed into many eyes. It was natural, moreover, that the whole interest of the trial should be centred in him, although Georges, the Polignacs, and the other conspirators, whose accomplice he was accused of being, were by his side, for it was principally against him that proceedings had been taken; and, as far as the latter were concerned, neither their intentions nor their fate could be doubtful. On the other hand, nothing was less proved than Moreau's participation in their plot. His attitude during this severe trial did not belie the high opinion that had been conceived of him; and more than once the president of the Tribunal was so far agitated by the nobility, calmness, and forcibleness of his replies, that the accused seemed transformed into a judge. Every precaution had been taken to insure his condemnation. The task had not, it is true, been confided to a military commission, although the one was at hand which had so speedily despatched the Duc d'Enghien. They had been deterred by the 'bad effect' which such an offence would have produced; but they had suppressed the jury, they had rejected all the justification put forward by Moreau's defenders, and they had introduced into the Tribunal several picked judges, such as Hémart the President, Thuriot the *juge d'instruction*, Gérard, Selves, Granger, Bourguignon. The general was so strong in his own innocence that he attached little importance to the suppression

of the jury, provided he was tried by honest men. 'Try,' he wrote to his wife, a short time before his trial, 'try to ascertain whether those who are to try me are just men, incapable of betraying their conscience. If I am tried by honest men, I cannot complain, although it appears they have suppressed the jury.'[1]

The evidence in the trial greatly diminished the charges, which it had been hoped would be made out from the confessions that were partly extorted and partly wrested from their meaning. They revealed no new fact, except the violence which had been used towards some of the accused. One of them, whose information was of most importance, Picot, Georges' domestic, declared that they had been wrenched from him by torture, and by the offer of five hundred louis. He retracted everything, and showed his bruised wrists to the Tribunal. Previously, in the trial of Ceracchi, and in that of the infernal machine, the prisoners had complained of having been tortured when they refused to confess. All the depositions were revised, corrected, and completed. They proved with striking force that the royalists of London, deceived by their own illusions and by the false assurances of Lajolais, had blindly counted upon Moreau; that Lajolais had acted without his authority, and had not been able to obtain from him the sum necessary for his journey; and that Moreau had obstinately refused to enter into the conspiracy. On these points all the evidence agreed; this principal, decisive, unimpeachable fact of Moreau's refusal was clearly evident; it was exactly this which had ruined the conspirators, by forcing them to postpone their plot. Several witnesses deposed that Pichegru had been so disheartened by their interviews that he had determined to leave France. What charge, then, remained against the general? That of having consented to a reconciliation with the *traitor* Pichegru, which was what the president reproached him with?

'Since the beginning of the Revolution,' replied Moreau, 'there have been many traitors. There were men who

[1] Unpublished letter of Moreau, communicated by the Countess de Courval.

were traitors in 1789, who were not in 1793. Others were traitors in '93 and not in '95; others who were traitors in '95 have not been traitors since. Many were republicans, who are no longer so! General Pichegru may have had connections with Condé, in the Year IV; I believe that he had. But he was included in the proscription of Fructidor; he ought to be regarded as one of these proscripts. . . . When I saw the *Fructidorisés* at the head of the State, when the soldiers of Condé swarmed in the saloons of Paris and of the First Consul, I might very well interest myself in restoring to France the conqueror of Holland.'

Did they reproach him for not having denounced a man who had come to open his mind to him? That was not, as he himself said with just pride, an occupation that became the conqueror of Hohenlinden. That he had two or three interviews with him? It had not been in his power to avoid them, and to have had these interviews was no crime. If he had seen Georges, he had seen him in spite of himself, and only to reject his offers. But it was not proved that he had ever seen him; Lajolais, the only witness, who had spoken *de visu* of the interview on the boulevard of the Madeleine, now admitted that he had not seen Georges there; he had only pointed out Moreau to Pichegru. That he had not concealed his hatred to the Consular Government? These feelings did him honour, and no law forbade him to express them in private. A single deposition was invoked against him in the trial, as it has since been by his enemies,[1]—that of Roland, a very suspicious character, who was contradicted by all the other witnesses. Roland, who during the proceedings had enjoyed strange privileges, such as, while a prisoner in the Abbaye, going out of his prison accompanied only by the porter, who was his friend,[2] declared in his second examination that he had been sent by Pichegru to General Moreau to learn his last determination with regard to the conspiracy. 'I cannot,' Moreau is reported to have said, 'put myself at the head of any movement for the Bourbons. But if

[1] Thiers, *History of the Consulate.* Thibaudeau.

[2] These facts were proved in the trial.

Pichegru were to adopt another course, *and in that case I have told him that the Consuls and Governor of Paris must disappear*, I think I have a party strong enough to obtain authority; I will immediately make use of it to place every one in safety, after which public opinion shall decide what is best to be done.'

It was upon this expression, '*the Consuls must disappear*' (*il faudrait que les Consuls disparussent*), an expression recalled to memory a long time after the conversation took place, that Moreau's complicity was proved. According to the accusation, and according to the historians who have adopted this view, it meant this: Assassinate first, and then I will come in to take advantage of the assassination and screen the assassins! But Roland himself disavowed the meaning that was given to his words: 'The general,' he exclaimed, 'did not say that the Consuls *were to disappear;* he only said, "In that case, *they would have to disappear.*"'[1]

It was then, after all, only an hypothesis on his part. But how is it possible to admit the absurd contradictions that it implied? As Moreau remarked, it was a ridiculous project, this of making use of the royalists, in the hope that if they were victorious they would entrust the power to him. 'For ten years,' he nobly added, 'I made war, and I am not aware that in all those ten years I was guilty of absurdities. . . . Make myself a dictator,' he repeated, 'and for accomplices they give me partisans of the Bourbons! Where are my soldiers, then? Where are those whom I have seduced in the Senate, in the Council of State, in the Army?' Finally, supposing Moreau to have been foolish enough to hope that the first use the royalists would make of their victory would be to confer the dictatorship on him, believing even this isolated evidence, of such palpable improbability, what did it prove? That Moreau expressed hopes for the conspirators, and intended to enter upon the scene after their success in order to profit by it; but hitherto he had neither been their associate nor their accomplice, he maintained his attitude of expectation and

[1] *Procès instruit par la cour de justice criminelle contre Georges, Pichegru, Moreau*, etc. 8 vols. Paris, 1804.

abstention; no act could be brought against him, so that the accusation of this single witness, whose motives were clearly disclosed by the exceptional indulgence with which the Government treated him, could not be the grounds of a condemnation, even admitting that it was sufficient as a proof, which was contrary not only to all justice but to all jurisprudence.

The fact which they pretended to prove, upon the deposition of Roland, supposed in Moreau an impatience of ambition carried to madness, and nothing was more contrary to the known character of the general, who was eminently distinguished by calmness, wisdom, and the moderation of his conduct. Though his political convictions very were firm, Moreau had always displayed a kind of instinctive dislike to politics; it involved, in his time, too much intrigue, too much mental reservation and underhand work, to suit him, and he often repeated that he was made for war, and that he wished to confine himself to his profession. He was, in reality, born to be the first soldier of a republic like Washington's, the citizen general of a free country; he possessed all its great virtues; he had nothing that was requisite to be the idol of a covetous, conquering, vain democracy, insatiable of flattery, that only yielded to those who treated it by turns with adulation and brutality. What he least resembled was certainly the vulgar ambitious man, at once dupe and deceiver, such as Roland depicted him; his whole career belied it. He had never, like so many other generals, mixed himself up with our civic troubles, he had never thought of using his glory and his influence over the army to interfere in the quarrels of parties, or to claim his share of power. On the 18th Brumaire, beguiled like the most enlightened men of the epoch by Bonaparte's republican declarations, he had kept himself in the background of his rival, and had accepted from him the most compromising mission. If this was the act of a too confiding spirit, it was certainly not that of an ambitious man. But he had a better argument at his command; there was in his past life a deed of public notoriety, which was a still more positive proof of disinterestedness. It was his refusal to

accept Sieyès' offers, when the director had proposed that he should strike a *coup-d'état*, and seize the dictatorship, a short time previous to Bonaparte's return from Egypt. This conclusive fact was of great importance, for the moral effect it would produce, if not as an argument for the defence, and Moreau begged Sieyès to come and bear witness to it before the tribunal; but this senator, whose natural prudence had increased since the threats and insults which his opposition at the time of the Consulate for life had drawn upon him from Bonaparte, replied to Moreau: '*That he hoped the general would be good enough not to ruin him by insisting upon his request.*'[1] Moreau therefore confined himself to recalling the fact without invoking the testimony of Sieyès.

Moreau's replies were moreover so forcible and so clear that they needed no external assistance. However brilliant they may have been from their nobleness and pride, they were still more remarkable for that sterling accuracy which convinces men and silences all objections. The two witnesses, who had conducted Pichegru to his house, having admitted that the interview had only lasted a quarter of an hour, 'A quarter of an hour,' said he, 'is a short time to discuss a plan of Government!' And when they stated that Pichegru came away discontented, 'If Pichegru was discontented, it was evidently because we had not come to an understanding!' When he was questioned about Lajolais' journey, 'I saw M. Lajolais,' he said, 'at Paris, in the month of June; M. Lajolais reached London the following month of December. You must own that I had not a very diligent messenger in him!' When Roland related how he had gone to him with propositions from Pichegru, 'Here are two men,' exclaimed Moreau, 'one of whom makes propositions, and the other accepts them. Which is the guiltier of the two? He who made them. Why, since our imprisonment, am I kept in close confinement, while M. Roland is placed in the Abbaye, with one of his friends, and enjoys the greatest liberty?' The

[1] Manuscript notes of the tribune Moreau, communicated by the Countess de Courval.

president having asked him whether he was not paid by the Government, and how much he received, 'Do not, I pray you,' said Moreau, 'weigh my services against my pay.' He only made one allusion to Bonaparte; he did it without anger, but with the most cutting contempt. It was when his confidential letter to the First Consul was produced: 'The First Consul,' he said, 'has doubtless considered this letter as a justifying proof! *he is too magnanimous* not to have withheld it had it contained anything that could compromise me!'

When the examination was over, Moreau asked to be heard himself before his defenders. He gave a sketch of his past life, in language of antique simplicity, which, he said, he addressed not to the judges, but to the people, and which was worthy, in fact, of having a whole nation for auditory. 'Unfortunate circumstances,' he said, 'brought about by chance or prepared by hatred, may darken for a time the life of the most honest man; with a great deal of skill, a criminal may dispel suspicion and the proofs of his crimes. A whole life is always the surest testimony for and against an accused; it is therefore to my life that I appeal in answer to my accusers; it has been public enough to be known.

'I had begun to study law at the commencement of that Revolution which was to found the liberty of the French people; it changed the course of my life; I devoted it to arms. I did not place myself among the soldiers of liberty from ambition; I embraced a military career out of respect for the rights of the nation. *I became a soldier because I was a citizen.* I bore this character under the standards; I have always preserved it. The more I loved liberty, the more I submitted to discipline. I rose rapidly enough, but always step by step, without ever passing over a single one; always by serving the country, never by flattering committees. When I became general-in-chief, and victory led us amid foreign nations, I endeavoured to make them respect the character of the French people as much as they dreaded their arms. War, under my orders, was only a scourge upon the field of battle; more than

once the nations and powers have testified to this, and I believed this conduct as fit as our victories to make the conquests of France!'

He then recalled his disgrace after the 18th Fructidor, 'for having been too slow in denouncing a man in whom he had only seen a brother in arms till evidence had proved him guilty;' his steadfastness in serving in subaltern posts, and how when again called upon to command in chief, by the reverses of our arms, *he was, so to speak, re-named general by our disasters;*' he reminded them of his refusal to seize the power with Sieyès, 'believing that he was made to command armies, and not wishing to rule the Republic;' of his imprudent but certainly disinterested co-operation in the 18th Brumaire; of his brilliant services in the campaigns of Ulm and Hohenlinden; and, lastly, of his return to private life. What had they to reproach him with since his retirement? No other crime than that of freedom of speech. 'His speeches? They had often been favourable to the operations of the Government, and if sometimes they had not been, *could he believe this liberty to be a crime among a people who had so many times decreed the liberty of the press, and who had even enjoyed it under kings!*

'If I had wished,' he added, 'to conceive and follow out plans of conspiracy, I should have concealed my sentiments, and solicited all offices that would have placed me in the midst of the forces of the nation. In order to trace out this course, in default of political genius, which I did not possess, I had examples known to every one, and rendered illustrious by success. *I perhaps knew well that Monk only left the army when he wanted to conspire; and that Cassius and Brutus only drew near to Cæsar that they might slay him.*'

This harangue bore the stamp of honour and integrity which cannot be imitated; it excited an inexpressible emotion in the auditory. Several times the Assembly burst forth in applause; a sudden light entered their minds; the conqueror of Hohenlinden seated on the bench of the accused appeared greater than the new emperor upon his throne. The judges saw with consternation this unexpected

triumph, which seemed to proclaim beforehand, in the name of public opinion, the innocence and acquittal of a man whom they had been ordered to condemn. Many of them, constrained by the evidence of truth and the voice of conscience, had become favourable to the accused at the end of the trial; some only figured in this tribunal as instruments, and they were resolved to fill the infamous office to the end; but they all knew that to acquit Moreau would be to condemn an implacable master; a terrible dilemma for the most upright judge, in the dependent situation into which the magistracy had fallen.

Georges' attitude during the trial was such as might have been expected from a vanquished man who did not wish to survive his defeat, and whose strength of character had never been mistaken even by his enemies. Having made the sacrifice of his life, he disdained to defend it, and only replied to the president's questions, when, by so doing, he could raise the honour of his party, or serve the interests of his fellow-prisoners. Georges only defended himself upon one point—upon his pretended participation in the plot of the infernal machine, and this he did with the greatest energy, and conclusively proved that the letter signed *Gédéon*, the only proof against him, was not in his handwriting, and could not have been sent by him. With regard to the present conspiracy, the accusation of murder fell to the ground before the unanimous testimony of the witnesses. This bold partisan had plotted an 18th Brumaire for the benefit of royalty; he had not prepared for an assassination. Those who persisted in calling him a brigand were compelled to admire the superb coolness of his replies, the skilfulness of his explanations, and the haughty irony with which he treated the men who held his life in their hands. He seemed to urge them to finish, to defy them to bring him to regard as serious the phantom of a trial that was taking place; he looked upon it as a pure formality and a useless hypocrisy. While he felt keenly the misfortunes of his companions, he showed the greatest indifference about his own fate; he incessantly encouraged them by his exhortations, sustained them by his life and

character, and showed them by his own example, by his stoical contempt for death, that their greatest force consisted in hoping for nothing. He appeared to play beforehand with the instrument of death, as if to familiarise them with the idea of their sentence. It is impossible to read these proceedings, which were Georges' testament, without saying that his was not the soul of a murderer.

On the 9th of June, at eight o'clock in the morning, the judges retired to deliberate and draw up the sentence. One of them, the upright Lecourbe, brother to the general, preserved an account of this fatal day worthy of the time of Tiberius. They had been hurried, deceived in a thousand ways by the familiars of the palace, especially by Réal, the natural medium between the judges and the Government. Every spring capable of influencing them had been touched, ambition, servility, fear; even their scruples of humanity had been appealed to. The Emperor, it was said, wished a sentence of death to be passed upon Moreau; it was a satisfaction which they must give him, unless they wished to offer him an affront; but, if he wished to see Moreau condemned, it was solely for the pleasure of pardoning him. They ought to trust to imperial generosity. To acquit the prisoner would, on the other hand, cause his sure ruin, for the Emperor would then act as chief of the State, who is called upon to pronounce, not upon a judicial trial, but upon a political question; he would in that case only consult the interests of his crown. These motives, which were only too present to the thoughts of the judges, were developed anew by Thuriot in the Chamber of Council; he dwelt especially upon the wish of the Emperor and his intention to grant pardon. It was then that, carried away by the invincible impulse of a right conscience, the Hellenist Clavier exclaimed, '*And who will pardon us?*' This cry of honour and outraged integrity weighed with them at first; out of the twelve judges, seven voted for the acquittal of General Moreau, and five only for his condemnation. But Hémart, the president, refused to close the discussion, and these lamentable debates continued for some hours longer.

During this time, Bonaparte, informed of the changes in

the deliberation by frequent communications, and irritated by the unforeseen resistance which he met with in magistrates of whose docility he had felt assured, flew into a violent passion at the idea of seeing his prey escape him; he endeavoured by every means in his power to change the decision of the judges. The accused, who had nothing more to do with the case since the close of the trial, were submitted, by his order, to a sort of extraordinary examination, in order to extract from them fresh confessions, and he did not hesitate to assert that they had furnished fresh charges against Moreau, and he hastened to write himself to Cambacérès,[1] 'that *it appeared* that the accused had declared that instead of three interviews between Pichegru and Moreau, there had been five; in consequence of this he desired the attorney-general to ask for admission to the sitting, *seeing that the judges were still deliberating*, in order to inform the Court of a new order of things. . . . This denunciation,' he added, 'would be added to the proceedings, and *give place to a sentence more conformable to justice and the interest of the State*.' These last words prove that he knew the first result of the deliberation, and that, in order to make the judges withdraw it, he did not hesitate to show them his displeasure. The communication was made, and the deliberation re-opened. Thuriot returned to the painful extremity to which the Government would be reduced by forcing upon it a *coup-d'état*. Hémart dwelt upon the bad effect which Moreau's acquittal would produce in foreign countries. The Powers would be glad of such a pretext for refusing to recognise the Emperor. Lecourbe energetically protested against the manœuvres employed to influence the judges; his colleagues began to give way. Then Bourguignon proposed a middle term, which consisted in condemning Moreau, and at the same time insuring for him the benefit of extenuating circumstances: the judges would thus satisfy their consciences by giving a light punishment, and the Government, by passing the sentence it demanded. This compromise was immediately accepted, through the weakness of some and the com-

[1] Bonaparte to Cambacérès, June 9, 1804.

plaisance of others. Lecourbe and Rigaud alone persisted in their opinion, and defended to the end the honest man who was the victim of the most cowardly and most odious persecution. Moreau was sentenced to two years' imprisonment; twenty others of the accused, among whom were Georges, the Polignacs, and the Marquis de Rivière, were condemned to death; the rest were acquitted.[1]

On learning that Moreau had escaped the capital punishment, Bonaparte flew into a violent rage, probably, as his panegyrists insinuate, because he had lost an opportunity of exercising his right of pardon. They have even gone so far as to write that the judges had been influenced by the pressure of public opinion, which had imposed upon them an indulgence contrary to their judgment, and made them sacrifice duty to popularity. Pressure of public opinion, at a time when opinion was terrified! At a time when there was neither a tribune nor a journal in which a free voice could be heard! At a time when the Government held all lives in its hands! According to these shameful excuses, the victim in this trial was not Moreau, but Bonaparte; and they give as a proof of his clement intentions his eagerness to commute the sentence of two years' imprisonment for one of *perpetual exile*, which rid him of Moreau for ever! To mention such aberrations is to condemn them. Moreau felt the penalty itself less than the iniquitous declaration that he was *guilty*. 'They have just,' he wrote, on coming out of the court, 'sentenced me to two years' imprisonment. It is the height of horror and infamy. If I am a conspirator, I ought to die. There could be no extenuating circumstances, as the sentence states. . . . If it was proved that I had taken part in the conspiracy,' he repeated, 'I ought to be condemned to death as the chief. *No one will believe that I played the part of a corporal.*'[2]

The commutation of the sentence for one of perpetual exile was not demanded by Moreau, as had been said, but proposed by Fouché, in the name of the Government, to

[1] Lecourbe: *Opinion sur le procès de Moreau. Procès-verbal de ce qui s'est passé dans la Chambre du Conseil.*

[2] Unpublished letters of Moreau.

Madame Moreau, who trembled lest her husband should experience the same fate as Pichegru, and who accepted it without hesitation. Moreau was ignorant of the negotiation. 'If the Government,' he wrote on this subject, 'is not sufficiently tranquillised by my confinement in a State prison, if they require my exile from France, I shall submit to it, since there is no dishonour in obeying force, but I cannot negotiate upon this point; *my consent would convert this fresh penalty into a favour, and I will accept none.*'[1] His presentiment did not deceive him; it was in reality a favour that Bonaparte pretended to have granted to Moreau, in banishing him from his country; and he endeavoured to induce the belief that this pardon had only been granted at the request of the general: '*You have asked leave*,' wrote the Grand Judge, June 21st, 1804, 'to go to the United States, and his Majesty does not intend you to return to France without having first obtained his express permission.' Madame Moreau's reply, written in the name of her husband, who was ill, proves not only that the general was a stranger to the step, but that the duration of their exile had not been anticipated, and that the pretended benefit had a fresh snare. '*It was I alone*,' she wrote, 'who asked permission from his Majesty to leave our country. My husband has done nothing but conform to the decree that has been passed; but he did not in the least expect an indefinite exile.'[2]

The Emperor ordered Moreau's estate and town house to be purchased, and gave them to two of his generals. It was judged necessary to hasten the departure of the exile, for it was known that if the masses were indifferent to his misfortunes, all generous hearts sympathised with him, and the attitude of a certain number of his ancient companions in arms had given rise to some alarm. During the whole course of the trial, the soldiers on guard had paid him military honours, and the day that he returned to his cell after his sentence the prisoner had found it ornamented with flowers,—a touching and discreet homage rendered only to

[1] Unpublished letters of Moreau.
[2] Letter, communicated by the Countess de Courval.

misfortune, and which had a thousand times more value than those which had hailed his triumphs! This testimony of secret pity was the only reward that he carried away from a country to which he had rendered such glorious services. Meanwhile the author of his ills, the man who in Brumaire had led him into committing almost the only fault with which he could be reproached, the man whose political career, compared with that of Moreau, had been one long series of treachery, violence, and criminal intrigue, was receiving ovation after ovation, applauded by a people of prætorians; example of distributive justice that is neither new nor unique, and which ought to give strength to men who are called to experience like trials, by showing that others have known how to bear them in still more difficult times and with superior merit.

After having set sail for America, General Moreau was obliged to stop at Cadiz, for the confinement of his wife, who had insisted on accompanying him notwithstanding her situation. Fouché hastened to urge upon the Spanish Government the departure, and, if necessity required it, the expulsion of the exile. 'Four years ago to-day,' wrote Moreau, 'I gained the battle of Hohenlinden. This event, glorious enough for my country, procured for my fellow-citizens that repose of which they had been so long deprived; I alone have not yet obtained it. Can it be refused me, at the extremity of Europe, five hundred leagues from my country?'[1]

Some time after, the magistrate Lecourbe, he who had ventured to maintain Moreau's innocence to the last, having presented himself at an audience at the Tuileries, with the members of the Court of Paris, Bonaparte advanced quickly towards him, and speaking violently, said: 'How can you dare to pollute *my palace* with your presence? Away, prevaricating judge, away!'[2]

On the 26th of June Georges was executed with eleven of his companions. Bonaparte had granted a pardon to the Marquis de Rivière, to the Polignacs, and to five others

[1] Unpublished letter of Moreau.
[2] Thibaudeau, Lecourbe, Lafayette.

who had been condemned, upon the supplication of their families and his own. It was remarked that pardon had only been granted to gentlemen, and Murat, they say, bitterly reproached him with it. Thus twelve heads fell for a conspiracy that had, in a great measure, been provoked by the police, and which had gone no further than secret meetings. This is what has been called the clemency of Napoleon.

CHAPTER XII

NEGOTIATIONS — PLAN OF THE NAVAL CAMPAIGN — POPE PIUS VII. IN PARIS — ACCOUNT OF THE SITUATION IN 1804 — THE DECENNIAL PRIZES

THE *régime* inaugurated under the name of Empire was no other than pure Cæsarism, such as Rome and Byzantium had known. Certain forms of legality had hitherto subsisted; they had often been violated, but these very violations, and the subtle interpretations to which recourse was had to justify them, testified to the existence of a permanent rule, inseparable from the institutions, which was acknowledged even by those who transgressed it. These last forms disappeared with the Consular system, and there remained no other law than the caprice of a single man. There was henceforth no barrier against his disordered will, and, if any grandeur was still left in the nation, it was only what they held from him. If after this man, incomparable in war, superior in the art of organising despotism, though of no great ability in politics, a successor arose without capacity, everything would fall to pieces, and the country would pass without transition from Cæsar to Augustulus, for France no longer possessed even those remnants of institutions which in Rome subsisted after the fall of the Republic. This was the outcome, at the end of a few years, of a Revolution which had begun by the Declaration of the rights of man! Its extraordinary failure has generally been explained by necessity, a term which, in the present day, is made to justify all human wickedness. A very few words suffice to condemn this miserable commonplace, which is so convenient for routine and mediocrity. It is

easy to prove that neither France nor Europe was conscious of this pretended necessity. At home it was so little felt, during the years that preceded the proclamation of the Empire, that Bonaparte himself did not dare to invoke it openly. Every one of the steps which, since the 18th Brumaire, he had taken towards this secret end of his desires had been covered by innumerable feints and dissimulations, which had deceived even those about him. Since the time when he had asked for three months' dictatorship to save the Republic, he had never ceased to disavow the intentions that were ascribed to him as a perfidious and calumnious invention of his enemies; he had gained so much credence for this lie, that no one would believe in his project, even in the face of evidence, and he had not ventured to unmask it till he had taken precautions to render all resistance impossible. It is not thus that changes take place which are demanded by public opinion. France wished for order and a stable government, she did not ask for such a despotism. We may add, too, that she did not merit it. No; however demoralised and however low she may have been at that time in consequence of the fearful immolations of the Terror and the sterile agitations of the Directory, France still possessed too much intelligence, too much sense of morality, too much energy and civilisation, to merit a system which had served as a chastisement to the people of the Lower Empire! She had not risen to such a rank among the nations, to fall suddenly into a state of social degradation, a thousand times worse than the wretchedness of the Middle Ages, and which even uncivilised tribes had rejected. This *régime* was, in fact, repugnant to all her lofty and strongest instincts, contrary to her genius, to her interests, to her needs, to her just pride as a nation imparting education, to the *rôle* she had just played so brilliantly throughout the eighteenth century, and to the noble ideas of justice and liberty which she had spread in the world. It had been imposed upon her by surprise, by a soldier tribune, who took advantage of the weakness of a people intoxicated with military glory, to speculate upon their too confiding

admiration; but she had submitted to it, she had not desired it. In order to create this power, unprecedented among modern nations, it was necessary to do violence to the spirit of the people no less than to the spirit of the times; in order to preserve it, it was necessary to hinder this people from recovering a consciousness of its own existence, by oppressing the enlightened classes and plunging them into a vortex of indefinite adventures.

The necessity of this change can be still less defended on the score of our influence in Europe. It has been said that the Powers had not been sufficiently beaten to accept the great results of the French Revolution, that it was necessary for it to take the form of a military dictatorship in order to be respected, before returning to its true principles. Nothing is more historically false than such a view. For a long time the parts had been completely reversed; it was we who were threatening Europe, and it was Europe that was trembling before us. Bonaparte had inaugurated, with his Italian campaign, a system of conquest that had nothing in common with the ancient defensive wars of the Republic, nor even with our wars of proselytism. After the 18th Brumaire this system had frightfully increased, and we were carrying nothing but servitude abroad. Bonaparte had already fettered or gravely compromised the independence of all the neighbouring nations, and he held the others in fear and immobility. By his violent and perfidious practices, by his interference in the affairs of others, by his insolent pretensions, and by his continual surprises, he had incessantly displeased and troubled Europe, who had no reason to be uneasy with regard to the spreading of republican principles, but who had everything to fear from an ambition which they had learned to know. In such a situation what could the Powers think when they saw him revive the model of the old Empire of the West? What effect could these incessant evocations of Cæsar and Charlemagne produce on their minds? If the Consul, who was only an upstart of yesterday, showed such an exacting disposition, was it to be supposed that the Emperor would be more easily satisfied?

Not only then was a determination calculated to give rise to so much alarm unnecessary, but it was extremely impolitic even for the aims of an ambition rightly understood. This transformation of the Consulate into an Empire, fatal within, dangerous without, was the work of the will of one and the complaisance of all. It was inspired by a puerile vanity, for which real power was no longer enough if it was not accompanied by that external homage invented and brought to perfection by so many centuries of monarchical superstition. In this Bonaparte was very inferior to Cromwell, of whom he spoke with so much disdain; in the English statesman there was more seriousness, more sense, more manliness. Cromwell's faculties were in certain respects less striking, but they were firmer, more profound, more fit for governing. Bonaparte's genius is prodigious, but within narrow limits. He was endowed with an extraordinary penetration, and yet he had no foresight; he was calculating, and yet he was incapable of governing himself. Here the comparison is not to his advantage. He made great political interests subservient to a miserable satisfaction of self-love. Never did the innate littleness of his soul betray itself more visibly than in the feverish haste with which he adopted all the forms of ancient etiquette. What did he care for the perils which this petty ambition was going to create for us, provided that he, the son of the obscure lawyer of Ajaccio, could call kings 'our dearly-beloved brother'—provided that he could sign his letters to the Pope, 'Your devoted son'—provided that he could say, 'My good town of Paris, my subjects, my people, my ministers, my palace, my forest of Fontainebleau'? These expressions constantly fell from his lips, and he never seemed weary of them.

But it was not enough for him to borrow from the ancient *régime* its most discredited titles, forms, and pomps; what he envied the most was the prestige that results from ancient possession, and the idea of legitimacy which popular prejudice attaches to hereditary tradition. Not having succeeded in purchasing from the Bourbons a renunciation of their rights, which would to a certain extent have palliated

the vice of origin by which his power was blemished in his own eyes, he resolved to supply this deficiency by a religious coronation—a ceremony to which men had so long attributed the power of legalising usurpation. In rendering this unexpected homage to worn-out superstitions he was about to commit a fresh anachronism, not less unseasonable than the preceding one, for if monarchical faith had still its believers, it had long since been emancipated from religious faith, and what had been able to draw along the contemporaries of Pepin the Bref was much less fit to dazzle the contemporaries of Voltaire and Montesquieu. It was the Pope himself that Napoleon had resolved to ask to metamorphose this fact into right—an operation that was about as conformable to the spirit of the time as the transmutation of metals.

As early as the beginning of May 1804, before even the Empire had been officially proclaimed, he informed Cardinal Caprara of his intention of asking the Pope to come to Paris to crown him, in return for all that he had hitherto done for the Church, and charged him to make the necessary overtures to Rome. From the peremptory and decided tone of the First Consul, Caprara saw that he had the success of this step very much at heart, and it was under this aspect that he presented it to the Court of Rome. Her acquiescence would be worth immense temporal advantages to the Holy See—probably an extension of territory; her refusal would ruin everything. As for an evasive or dilatory reply, she need not flatter herself that it would be taken seriously: 'No excuse would be accepted, even if it were confirmed by Cardinal Fesch. It would only be regarded as a pretext.'[1]

This request, foreseen by Lafayette at the time of the Concordat, took the Court of Rome by surprise. They did not seem to have suspected that 'the desire to have the little phial broken over his head' had had anything to do with the services that Bonaparte had rendered. They did not appear to know that a selfish anxiety, totally

[1] Caprara to Consalvi, May 10, 1804. Expression quoted in *L'Eglise Romaine et le premier Empire*, by Count d'Haussonville.

distinct from all religious sentiment, had alone inspired his policy with the Church. And yet, since they had signed this pact with him, how many deceptions, how many disappointments, how many causes of complaint and distrust had they not had, beginning with the fraud at the time of the signature and publication of the organic articles, and ending with the false retractation of the constitutional bishops, and the violence of the extradition of Vernègues! The Court of Rome had accepted all this, and many other humiliations besides, so long as she felt that her existence in an epoch so new was held by a thread, and that this thread was in such formidable hands. She had submitted to all the hard conditions of the pact; she saw the French bishops employed as officials, sometimes assisting in the execution of the laws on the conscription, sometimes denouncing or discovering the authors of a political plot, and sometimes aiding, by a commanded enthusiasm, the manifestations of a false public opinion, of which Bonaparte made use in the interest of his ambition. The time was not far distant when Fouché, minister of police, was going to write in all truth his famous circular: 'My lord bishop, between your functions and mine there is more than one point of similarity.' All these dishonourable services — unworthy of a power which pretended to be a moral authority—the Church rendered with sighs; but she preferred to render them rather than lose an omnipotent protection. *Omnia serviliter pro dominatione.* To these, in some sort private grievances of the Church, had been added, quite recently a subject of reproach much graver in her eyes, if she had at heart her office of spiritual judge and sovereign arbiter of consciences: that was the crime of Vincennes. It could not escape the Court of Rome that one of the determining motives of Bonaparte, in calling the Pope to Paris, was to place the murderer under the protection of the pontifical halo, to show him not only absolved but glorified by the elect of God. The other sovereigns had the right to regard the murder of the Duc d'Enghien only from a political point of view; the Pope was bound, by his most imperious duties, as the shepherd of souls, to look

upon it besides in a moral point of view, for the coronation that was demanded of him had no other end than that of finishing the work begun by the murder at Vincennes; that is to say, the substitution of the dynasty of Bonaparte for that of the Bourbons. In sanctioning this work he gave his approbation to the preparatory acts, he openly declared himself responsible for a deed which in his heart he considered criminal,—a deed which a schismatic sovereign, the emperor of Russia, had not hesitated to denounce to the indignation of the civilised world; in short, he covered the guilty with the prestige of his authority, at a time when universal reprobation prognosticated its speedy chastisement.

It is not possible to suppose that Pius VII., however weak and narrow-minded he may have been, did not feel scruples that were so natural to his position. Consalvi says in his Memoirs, 'that the death of the Duc d'Enghien was one of the reasons which made the Holy Father most hesitate, and that when *the murder of this great and innocent victim* was announced to him, he shed as many tears over the *crime* of the one as over the death of the other.'[1] If it was so, what consideration could have led him to associate himself by a solemn and irrevocable step with an act which he so bitterly deplored? The fear of losing all the temporal advantages that he had hitherto acquired? The hope of gaining fresh ones? He very soon had an opportunity of recognising how chimerical was this hope. As for the disgrace which he dreaded, his complaisance in no way preserved him from it; but how much would not his moral authority have gained in the eyes of the world, if he had merited it by a noble resistance instead of incurring it for the minutiæ of ecclesiastical discipline or quarrels for territory? He was moreover so conscious of the gravity of the step that was demanded of him that he did not dare to take the whole responsibility upon himself, and did not decide in the affirmative till he had consulted a commission of twenty cardinals. Listen again to the testimony of Cardinal Consalvi on this point: 'But,' he adds, 'in going to Paris, the Pope gave Napoleon such a striking proof of

[1] *Mémoires de Consalvi*, tome ii.

his *paternal tenderness and sovereign esteem*, Rome so derogated from her rights and her customs, that we did not doubt but that the Emperor would take such a marked act of condescension kindly from the Holy See. We were disappointed in our *religious* expectations!'

The moment was strangely chosen for giving Napoleon this great mark of tenderness and esteem. But what were these 'religious' expectations which enabled the Pope and his counsellors not only to overcome a repugnance so natural but to stifle the imperious voice of duty? It is easy to see that for the most part they were hopes of a purely temporal character. The conditions which the Court of Rome set to the Pope's journey to Paris were, it is true, of a spiritual order, but, although they were first presented as necessary and absolute, the most essential were by degrees set aside; which proves that she had in view interests of another kind, which exercised a preponderating influence over her will. By these conditions, minutely enumerated in a minute of Cardinal Fesch,[1] it was stipulated that the Emperor's letter of invitation to the Pope should mention, as the determining motive of this step, 'the advantage and service to religion.' He would not let it be said that the pontiff had resolved upon it out of complaisance to the sovereign, though this was the truth; it was further agreed that they should examine together the organic articles of the Concordat, and that they should require the retractation or the resignation of the constitutional bishops. Then followed other insignificant clauses, amongst which was this one, which depicts the sacerdotal spirit, and produces a singular effect in the midst of these grave negotiations: '*The Pope protests that he will not permit Madame Talleyrand to be presented to him.*' Upon the other points he would yield, but upon this one he was inflexible! Bonaparte had a sure means of quieting the scruples of the Court of Rome,—it was to excite her

[1] It is published by Artaud in his *Histoire de Pie VII.* This *Mémoire* is confirmed by a note of Consalvi's, dated June 6th, except the mention relative to Mme. Talleyrand.—D'Haussonville: *Pièces justificatives.*

cupidity. No one ever possessed to such an extent the art of raising hopes that he did not intend to satisfy; and he made great use of it on this occasion. Everything seemed arranged when a fresh difficulty arose at Rome, with regard to the oath the Emperor was to take—*to respect, and to cause to be respected, the laws of the Concordat and the freedom of religion.* 'A Catholic,' wrote Consalvi, 'cannot sanction heresy. . . . It is the essence of the Catholic religion to be intolerant. You must not flatter yourselves that you will overcome this difficulty in the presence of the Pope. Pius VII. will not yield. If you were to try it, he would not hesitate to rise from his seat and instantly leave the Church!' Nothing is more conformable to the spirit and traditions of Catholicism than such maxims; but the moment the Court of Rome advanced them she ought to have stood by them, and this is what she did not do,—another proof that all these objections were only pretexts, and that she wanted pressing in order to obtain greater advantages. It was necessary to parley, to quibble, to distinguish between 'civil tolerance and religious tolerance,' in a series of notes in which M. de Talleyrand, instructed by Bishop Bernier, showed himself an accomplished theologian. But his most decisive argument consists in enumerating all the measures that Bonaparte had decreed in favour of the Church and papacy since the first Italian campaign, and presenting them as a pledge of his intentions for the future. In drawing up this table he touched the right chord, for he replied to anxieties that were ever present to the mind of the Court of Rome, but anxieties which she could not candidly avow without laying herself open to the charge of simony. The thought which haunted her, and which she dared not express,—the thought which she was condemned to suppress, as much by prudence as by decency,—was the same which had dictated her concessions at the time of the Concordat: it was the hope of recovering the Legations, and even Avignon and Carpentras. Embarrassed by her false situation, obliged then as now to be contented with half promises, and to proceed by insinuations, she had been completely deceived by Bonaparte, from

not having frankly stipulated the conditions that she had at heart. She now said that he would not dare to deceive her a second time, whilst he, encouraged by his first success, having immense advantages on his side, boldly played the same game, profited by an understanding which allowed him to make his engagements very vaguely, and gave the Court of Rome hopes that he never intended to satisfy. She was thus duped a second time,—duped by her own avidity as well as by the craft of her adversary. In spite of the clamours she afterwards made about her deceptions, it is certain that she only received from Bonaparte indefinite assurances, which did not amount to a formal promise.

Napoleon, so far from thinking of even restoring a part of the Legations to the Holy See, was, at the time he raised these hopes, preparing for a transformation of the Cisalpine Republic into an Italian kingdom, of which the Legations were to form one of the finest provinces. To this effect, he caused the Consulta of Milan to send him petitions, which were even less sincere than those which had served as a pretext for his elevation to the presidency, without troubling himself about the disastrous impression which this fresh usurpation would produce in Europe. He had resolved, he wrote to M. de Melzi, 'to establish an order of things *more conformable to the spirit of the century*;'[1]— which meant a despotism similar to that which reigned in France. Knowing how easily the Italian patriots yielded to illusions, and how promptly they were inflamed by anything which seemed to promise the unity of their country, he enticed them by the grand word Italian fatherland. M. de Melzi, who was cooler and more clear-sighted than his countrymen, on account of his constant intercourse with the First Consul, did not shrink from incurring his anger by observing to him that Italy had hitherto only known the benefits of French domination by the imposition of new burdens. 'Melzi,' wrote Bonaparte to Marescalchi, 'had an attack of gout when he wrote me that. . . . He little understands human nature or the spirit of nations, even the most cowardly and the most depraved, if he thinks that

[1] Bonaparte to M. de Melzi, June 23, 1804.

they can only consider the money which their political existence costs them.'[1]

If enlightened Italians saw with little pleasure the projected change, the Powers could only regard it as a fresh subject of alarm or complaint, according as it directly menaced their existence, already compromised by our encroaching policy, or as it afforded them pretexts to make use of in the common interest. What better argument could we have given Pitt to urge with the European Cabinets hitherto undecided? This great minister had just resumed his place at the head of the Government of his country, in spite of the repugnance of the king. The Addington Ministry had fallen with a majority of more than fifty, overthrown by the evidence of public danger and by the feeling of their own incapacity. Pitt would have liked to take Fox into the Cabinet, in order to group around him all the national forces, but on this point he had met with an invincible obstinacy from King George. He therefore contented himself with offering a share of power to the friends of his illustrious rival, who refused it from a sentiment of exaggerated susceptibility. He has been reproached[2] for not having made the admission of Fox a *sine quâ non* of his own return to office; but without examining with his historian[3] whether the state of the king's health did not prevent him from insisting on this point, and admitting that the name and talent of Fox would have shed a lustre over the new administration, it is doubtful if, after this first effect, the ministry would not in the end have lost both in force and unity of action. For Europe this ministry had only one signification, that which was given to it by the presence of a man who had been the soul of the preceding coalition, and who, in spite of his errors or his eccentricities, had shown in this great struggle a firm character and an indomitable will. England was reassured in seeing him seize the helm which he had so long held in his strong hand. His well-known policy consisted in

[1] To Marescalchi, August 28, 1804.
[2] Macaulay: *Biographical Essays.*
[3] Lord Stanhope, vol. iv.

making the war general, and fighting us in Europe. These were exactly Napoleon's tactics against England; but for him it was attempting what was impossible, because he could only have Europe for him after conquering it, and because France remained exposed in case of defeat, while England was covered by her fortified position. Pitt's return to office was equivalent to a renewal of the continental war. Parliament, upon his first demand, voted him a sum of a quarter of a million sterling to be employed as he thought fit, in encouraging and sustaining the efforts which the Powers would be disposed to make in favour of the common cause.

Seeing this attitude of England, the interest of our policy seemed to enjoin on us an extreme reserve. We ought to have taken as much care to conciliate and propitiate the Continental powers as she displayed zeal in leading them into war; and, notwithstanding all the faults that had been committed, this task would still have been easy for us, so much had our late successes discouraged them. The fear which Napoleon inspired was so great, that the least concession from him would have sufficed to maintain peace. While preparing, then, with more activity than ever for his hazardous enterprise of a descent upon England, the commonest prudence might have suggested to him the duty of first making sure of the neutrality of Europe. But, by a most incomprehensible error, his diplomacy had never been more aggravating. We left him cool with Prussia, whose good will had rendered him so many services, in almost open rupture with Russia, of whom it would have been so easy to make an ally, and on far from cordial terms with Austria, who was our natural enemy, though a powerless enemy so long as she remained isolated. Instead of improving this situation, he aggravated it every day by the unbearable arrogance of his proceedings. We have seen what an irreparable wound he had made by his reply to the very legitimate protest of Russia against the seizure of the Duc d'Enghien upon the Germanic territory. Since then Russia had notified this protest to the Diet of Ratisbon; but Germany, in her alarm, did not dare to sustain it.

Austria alone feebly supported it, declaring, however, that she would be satisfied with a simple promise of explanation. If Napoleon consented to declare that his conduct had been dictated by secret motives, which he could not yet reveal, she would be satisfied.

He haughtily rejected this overture, and the Diet, which was not in a situation to think of war, accepted a middle term that was offered by the Elector of Baden. This prince, trembling to see his states become the field of battle for another European war, declared 'that he was satisfied with the explanations which had been given him,' and the Russian note was definitely put aside, but the quarrel was postponed, not settled; there remained in the hearts of all Germans the remembrance of a double offence, which was to be avenged later.

This conclusion was not calculated to calm the anger of Russia. She, however, refrained from pressing the weak Diet of Ratisbon, whose powerlessness alone had reduced it to submit to this humiliation, and laid this new defeat to the account of him who was the true author of it. The Court of Russia had just recapitulated, in a note addressed, July 21st, by M. d'Oubril to M. de Talleyrand, all her ancient grievances against France. These grievances she had never abandoned, although she had consented for a time to leave them dormant; and she now raised them, by demanding satisfaction upon all the points, viz. that we should evacuate the kingdom of Naples; that the king of Sardinia should receive his indemnity, which had been a hundred times promised and always deferred; that the Italian affairs should be definitely settled; lastly, that we should engage to evacuate the north of Germany and respect Germanic neutrality. It is painfully curious to compare these certainly very legitimate demands with the reply which M. de Talleyrand was reduced to urge against them.[1] Nothing shows more clearly the road we had travelled for some years. He retorts on the subject of the protection accorded by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg to Vernègues and to D'Entraigues, who were naturalised Russian subjects,

[1] Dated July 27.

and whose names could only recall our infringement of the rights of nations; he reproaches the Court of Russia for having gone into mourning after the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, which was for her a title to glory; he reverts to the intrigues of Markoff, whose character as an ambassador had not shielded him from public outrage, and whose only fault had been that he had too much penetration; in the last place he avails himself of the occupation of the Republic of the Seven Isles by the Russian troops, to justify our encroachments in Europe. This occupation had in reality been effected, but it was with the consent of France, who, knowing that she could not defend the Ionian Isles against England, had allowed Russia to take them, that she might afterwards use this as a reason for doing whatever she chose upon the Continent. The last accusation was the only one at all plausible, but the decisive argument, the only one upon which Napoleon counted, the one which was always the last word of his diplomacy, was the direct menace with which Talleyrand's despatch ended: 'The Emperor of the French,' he said, 'wishes for peace; but with God's aid *and his armies*, he is in a position to fear no one.'

It was then come to this, that Russia, a government scarcely emerged from barbarism, represented against us right, equity, the security of general interests; it was she who could invoke against us the cause of civilisation and the liberty of nations, a comparison that is crushing for the policy that had produced such an inversion of functions. D'Oubril replied to Talleyrand, by maintaining his conclusions and demanding his passports. Then, as in every other instance in which he was energetically opposed, Napoleon endeavoured to draw back; he retained D'Oubril under different pretexts; he dictated to Talleyrand a fresh note,[1] in which he protested his good intentions, and asked that the past might be forgotten. 'His private feelings had always led him to seek the *confidence*, *esteem*, *and friendship* of the Emperor Alexander;' in that case, it would have been well not to insult him by throwing in his teeth the

[1] September 5, 1804.

imputation of parricide. These vain and tardy words were taken for what they were worth, and our relations with Russia were broken off, though war was not actually declared. This was the issue of our policy towards a power who a few months before had offered herself as a mediator, and who had displayed towards us the most friendly dispositions.

Austria was almost on the point of following the example of Russia; she was only withheld from doing so by the insufficiency of her preparations. At the time of the elevation of Bonaparte to the Empire, the first idea of the Austrian sovereign had been to take advantage of this opportunity for obtaining, in exchange for his recognition, the title of hereditary Emperor of Austria, as he had already that of elected Emperor of Germany. But having since had reason to complain of French influence in the regulation of German affairs, in which Bonaparte sustained with all his power the little states against the Empire, and successfully combated the superannuated pretension of the nobility, the Austrian Cabinet had given up this notion. They showed very little eagerness to recognise the Emperor of the French. In spite of his reiterated promises, they seemed to fear (and this is sufficiently significant) that Napoleon, after having obtained the Austrian recognition, would fail to give his own to the Emperor of Austria. Napoleon lost patience, and, according to his custom, put an end to temporisings by showing the point of his sword. He ordered M. de Champagny to take, if it were necessary, a signed engagement, in order to reassure the Austrian Cabinet; but if their mistrust was only feigned, he was to compel them to pronounce, by driving them to their last entrenchment. 'You will say,' he said, 'that there is the commencement of a coalition, and that I shall not give it time to form; that they are strangely mistaken if they think that I shall make a descent upon England before the emperor has sent me his recognition; that it is not right of him, by his equivocal conduct, to keep my 300,000 men, with their arms crossed, upon the coast of the Channel; *that if they are mad* enough at Vienna to wish to renew the war, it

would be so much the worse for the Austrian monarchy!'[1] Such threats, the only means he employed in little as well as in great things, could not but fail in the end. They were not sufficient to constitute a policy. In an age of discussion, of publicity and of reasoning, at which the European nations had arrived, it was necessary to have recourse to other modes of persuasion; they were neither weak enough nor degraded enough to bear such language for any length of time. It is easy to imagine what impression it would produce upon a court that had formerly been so proud. What is singular is, that even the imminence of the coalition which he foresaw did not deter Napoleon from using these offensive and peremptory expressions. He saw the peril that they were creating for him, without doing anything to ward it off. He even blamed Talleyrand for having softened them in his despatches; he would not admit that Talleyrand really believed in the danger which he had been the first to point out. 'It would be,' he wrote, August 20th, 'not only madness, but absolutely impossible, for the House of Austria *to raise the standard of rebellion* alone, or even with Russia.' The word rebellion, applied to the Empire of Austria, shows to what a pitch of infatuation and intoxication he had already risen. But there were others whom he was still more anxious to convince of the impossibility of a fresh coalition, and they were the French themselves. In order to deceive them more surely, he did not shrink from having recourse to the same shameful frauds that he had made use of to ruin Moreau, and which the most degraded governments of our century have disdained to employ. 'The notes which you have sent me, *upon the powerlessness of Russia*,' he wrote to Fouché, 'are written by a man of sense . . . publish them in a newspaper, *as translated from an English paper;* choose the name of one that is little known.'[2]

The coalition that he sometimes disputed, and sometimes declared powerless, was nevertheless in an advanced state of formation, and instead of endeavouring to forestall it,

[1] Napoleon to M. de Champagny, August 3, 1804.
[2] Napoleon to Fouché, August 28, 1804.

which would have been a better policy than denying its existence, he seemed to wish to drive Prussia into it. This Power was drawn towards us by ties stronger than sympathy —by her interests. Though deeply wounded by the occupation of Hanover and the seizure of the Duc d'Enghien upon the territory of Baden, she had given us another unequivocal mark of her friendly dispositions, by refusing to accept the protestations which the Count de Provence had addressed to her at the proclamation of the Empire, and she was on the eve of expelling him from Warsaw to gratify the suspicious police of Napoleon. She had, it is true, signed a secret treaty with Russia, but this treaty was of a purely defensive character. Without informing the French Government of its existence, she had several times pressed upon them the essential points, that the army of Hanover should not exceed thirty thousand men, that no fresh violation of territory should take place in Germany, and Prussia declared that she should be not only satisfied but friendly. And, in order the better to make the French Cabinet understand the importance which he attached to these two objects, the king of Prussia had replaced his minister D'Haugwitz, the decided partisan of our policy, by M. de Hardenberg, who was not hostile, but independent. It was difficult to expect from a young and ambitious power a policy that could be more easily satisfied. Nevertheless, Napoleon contrived in a short time to displease her on all these points, in spite of his reiterated promises. As early as the month of July he increased his army in Hanover by an envoy of conscripts, alleging as a pretext the attitude taken by the foreign governments. 'At a time,' he wrote to Talleyrand, 'when the great Powers so far forget decorum as to go into mourning for men who wanted to overthrow the Government, it is only natural that I should take precautions *to be a match for them*;'[1] an argument to which his absolute mind incessantly returned. As we were threatened by Russia, we sought in our turn to exasperate Prussia! Such was the reasoning constantly followed in our foreign policy under the First Empire, and people are

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, August 2, 1804.

astonished that it ended by uniting Europe against us. To this grievance, which he aggravated by incessantly touching upon it, Napoleon very soon added another, which Prussia herself had not anticipated, but which she felt quite as much. In the course of his journey through the Rhenish provinces in the month of September, the Emperor of the French saw a great deal of the sovereigns of the secondary states of Germany. He encouraged them to join together, and form by these united forces a centre capable of resisting the two great states that coveted their spoils; in a word, he laid the foundation of that Confederation of the Rhine, the remembrance of which has remained so odious to German patriots.

His principal instrument in this work was the electoral Arch-chancellor Dalberg, whom he had favoured in the settlement of the indemnities, and who took every opportunity of representing to the confederates the interest they had in conciliating so formidable a neighbour.[1] Such an enterprise was perhaps politic in the narrow sense of the word; but, connected with so many other adventures, it only created an additional danger for us, for its first effect would necessarily be to alienate Prussia from us. She was informed of the project, and saw in it fresh reasons for being on her guard. A third circumstance drove her to extremities. In the beginning of October 1804, Napoleon, under the influence of that sort of infatuation which led him to defy and provoke his friends as well as his enemies, without any fresh grievance, and apparently without any other motive than the pleasure of gratifying a vain boast, suddenly gave orders for the seizure of the representative of England at Hamburg by a detachment of gendarmery. And what reason did he allege in justification of this new violation of territory? Lord Hawkesbury's circular, which was six months old, and which no one thought anything more about! Hear his own explanation on this subject:

'Immediately after the affair of Drake, Lord Hawkesbury had the *imbecility* to send a circular to all the Cabinets of Europe, to justify the conduct of this minister. In order

[1] Lucchesini: *Sulle cause e gli effetti della confederazione Renana.*

to point out more clearly the ridiculousness and the enormity of the principles he has advanced in it, I intended to send to the same Cabinets the circular with a reply. *I have since thought of something better.* I desire to have the English minister at Hamburg seized, with all his papers, and immediately after I will give notice of this seizure to all the Courts of Europe, justifying it by Lord Hawkesbury's note.'[1]

It was for such motives as these that this pernicious man staked at once the peace of Europe and the honour and future of his country. For the wicked pleasure of annoying the English Government, he did not hesitate to risk a war with the whole Continent; for such was the inevitable consequence of the seizure of Rumbold, coming after so many other crimes against the rights of nations. This time Napoleon came into collision unawares with the *casus belli* foreseen in the secret treaty of Prussia with Russia. A very lively and very peremptory note from the Prussian Cabinet made him reflect and draw back. He hastened to release Rumbold, but his pride was deeply wounded, for a short time before he had boasted that he could even seize the English resident at Berlin, if he chose. 'The king of Prussia,' he exclaimed, 'has given me a bad quarter of an hour, but I will return it with interest.'[2] Meanwhile, he wrote an apology, in a letter full of protestations of friendship, imprecations against England, who violated '*the rights* of nations, and even natural rights,' and of complaints of Alexander's ingratitude. This retractation, which was neither dignified nor genuine, put an end to this unfortunate business, but not to the mistrust which so flagrant a breach of faith naturally produced.

It is the comparison of this policy of provocation, calculated to raise all Europe against us, with the ostentation of his preparations against England, which has led several very sensible writers to conclude that the project of the descent was only a feint, intended to mask his plans of conquest upon the Continent. If this project was serious, how can

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, October 7, 1803.
[2] Lucchesini; *Sulle cause, etc.*

such reckless policy be explained? Why did he, who was about to throw all our available forces upon England, with the almost certain probability of being immediately surrounded there by the British fleets, set all the continental powers at defiance, and put them into such a state of irritation that their first step would infallibly be to take advantage of his absence to rush down upon France unarmed? If the descent was anything else than a feint, the policy was that of a madman. If the policy was calculated, the descent was only a false demonstration. It is impossible to escape from this dilemma, and we can understand how historians, penetrated above all with the sublimity of Napoleon's genius, have preferred to solve the difficulty by denying the reality of the project of expedition, rather than suppose that this extraordinary genius wanted common sense, and could not see things that would have struck the intelligence of a child. But it is impossible to retain the slightest doubt in regard to this, when we see the thousands of orders, of projects and counter-projects, which Napoleon's correspondence has revealed; when we see the interest, the passion, the obstinacy, the incredible resources that he employed in the realisation of his favourite enterprise, the profound and breathless anxiety with which he followed its various phases and definite failure; and history is forced to admit the amazing contrast that is presented to us in the same man, of marvellous faculties in action, associated with a weak and radically false judgment in the appreciation of general facts. I know that this opinion will appear paradoxical, and even blasphemous. The predominant faculty in the men of our time—a nervous and excitable generation—is imagination: hence the singular fascination exercised over them by a man whose rare power of calculation was in reality only governed by an unbridled will. Napoleon is the romanticism of politics. Even in works of art this predominance of the imaginative faculties only produces creations of ephemeral splendour, unless it is tempered by the control of the higher faculties of the intelligence; but in practical life it can only cause aberrations which are the more fatal because they are sustained by prodigious gifts.

In the management of great affairs there is no genius without common sense and correctness of judgment.

After various postponements and modifications, the great enterprise of Boulogne gradually emerged from the region of chimeras, and developed its colossal dimensions. Like all plans ill digested or out of proportion to the forces to be disposed of, it had been necessary to subject it to delays and improvements, which now seemed drawing to an end, but which were however only beginning. Put off from winter to spring, then from spring till summer, it was now fixed for the autumn of 1804. Napoleon, seeing the strong objections of his seamen, had ended by admitting the powerlessness of the flotilla alone, and had agreed to support it by a fleet strong enough to be mistress of the channel for some days. According to his project, one of our fleets was to take advantage of bad weather, which would disperse the English cruisers, to get out, effect its junction with another squadron of which it would raise the blockade; it was then to appear before Boulogne with superior forces. To carry out this plan, he had cast his eyes on Latouche-Tréville, whom he considered as the most daring of our naval officers. Latouche-Tréville was to get out of Toulon with ten ships, by deceiving Nelson, who thought this fleet was destined to reconquer Egypt; from thence he would sail for Rochefort, where he would rally six vessels and several frigates, and then come into the Channel either directly or by doubling Ireland. 'Let us be masters of the strait for six hours, and we are masters of the world!' wrote Napoleon, after having explained to him this embryonic plan, which was to be modified more than twenty times before it assumed its definite form.[1]

The Emperor supposed that if Latouche-Tréville started from Toulon by July 30th, he could appear before Boulogne in the month of September; but the admiral upon whom such great hopes rested died a short time after this, from a malady which he had contracted at St. Domingo. Latouche-Tréville and Brieux, who also died before he had been brought into any difficult emergency, were the only seamen

[1] Napoleon to Latouche-Tréville, July 2, 1804.

who were not exposed to the anger and imprecations of Napoleon. All the others, whatever may have been their merit—Decrès, Ganteaume, Villeneuve, Missiessy, Dumanoir, Villaret, Linois, Bourdon, Lallemand, Magon, Rosily—felt his insults or his disparagement. According to the theory with which he has himself furnished his historians, it is customary to maintain that the death of these two men was the principal, if not the sole, cause of the failure of the expedition. These two admirals were doubtless eminent men, but they did nothing which would place them above Decrès, Ganteaume, Villeneuve, and Linois, the victor of Algésiras. If, too, the success of the expedition depended on the life of two men, or rather of one man, for in Brieux's weak state no one could think of trusting him with such a command, it must be admitted that it was very defective. Moreover, it was not till much later that such importance was ascribed to them.

Napoleon was keenly disconcerted by the death of Latouche-Tréville. But, instead of renouncing his projects, he gave them an extension which rendered their realisation much more difficult. England having broken with Spain towards the commencement of September 1804, to punish her for an alliance with us disguised under the form of subsidies, Napoleon found himself master of all the ports and all the maritime resources of Spain, which enabled him to give flight to the ambitious conceptions for which he had already too much inclination. His flotilla received a new organisation, to which he gave the name of 'a fixed and permanent establishment,'[1] as if to reply to the doubts to which his incessant metamorphoses had given rise, or to induce a belief that it was henceforth in a state to suffice by itself. The construction and arming of vessels was at the same time pushed on with great activity in all the ports. But the rapid and surprising results that Napoleon obtained by exhausting our dockyards and draining our maritime population only deceived him more surely. Vessels were had in great numbers, but the quantity was obtained to the detriment of their quality. Badly built, worse manned,

[1] Napoleon to Decrès, September 9, 1804.

filled up with bad iron and bad wood, they sailed badly, and were disabled by the first gale.[1] Their crews, hastily formed, composed of sailors who for the most part had only remained at sea in ports and harbours, inexperienced marines, artillerymen incapable of pointing their pieces, were recruited by means of the pressgang, a detestable institution, doubly odious in a country in which it had not the sanction of tradition, but which would naturally be eagerly adopted by the man who had revived slavery. We see by Napoleon's correspondence that the employment of this brutal means was very repugnant to the Minister of Marine. The revival of such an odious practice was exclusively due to the Emperor. He incessantly stimulated the lukewarm zeal of Decrès on this point; it appeared to him that they had never taken enough. 'Order a *general pressgang*,' he wrote to him July 2d, 'there is still a possibility of seizing sailors;' and on the following 28th of August, 'there are more sailors. . . . Davoust writes to me that he can still seize eight hundred men.' This desire to have sailors at any price had just brought misfortune on the Republic of Genoa. Napoleon imposed upon her about this time a treaty by which she engaged to furnish him, no longer four thousand, but *six thousand* sailors, an immense concession which only excited his avidity and postponed merely for some few months the definite incorporation of the Genoese territory with the French Empire.

In spite of all these efforts of a will in revolt against the force of things, we had in reality only the appearance of a navy. Our fleets, so brilliant upon paper, had, like Roland's horse, a slight defect, which rendered all their qualities useless; they were scarcely able to move. Of these defects, which were repeatedly pointed out to him by his admirals, Napoleon took no account; he had so many men, so many guns, so many vessels, and that was enough. He attributed to his vessels the worth of his regiments, made his fleets manœuvre like his land armies, applying to maritime war his method of acting by great masses, without

[1] *Correspondance de Villeneuve*, published by Admiral Jurien de la Gravière: *Guerres Maritimes*.

perceiving that here matter ruled man, that the secret of superiority depended less on individual courage than on the experience and handling of these powerful machines; that, in short, great concentrations, such as he dreamed of, were in the first place very difficult to operate with sailing vessels, as they existed in his time, and in the next very inefficient, on account of the almost impossibility of a united action. As these different objections only provoked him to fits of anger or bitter complaints of the incapacity of his seamen, Decrès and his colleagues had gradually given up stating them, and had resigned themselves to second him with all their power, but with little hope in the success of the enterprise.

Decrès had proposed to him for Latouche-Tréville's successor Admiral Villeneuve, an officer whose skill and courage could not be doubted; but he was a cool, clear-sighted, modest man, as little calculated to satisfy himself with illusions as to inspire them in others. Villeneuve accepted the command of the fleet of Toulon with a repugnance which he did not seek to hide, and without concealing the difficulties of the task that was demanded of him. Napoleon was still far from the plan which he ultimately adopted, and which he did not fix on till he had tried many others. The instructions which he sent to Villeneuve for the fleet of Toulon, and to Missiessy for the squadron of Rochefort, from the 12th to the 23d of December 1804, show that he had not yet thought of uniting their operations to those of the flotilla. 'Having judged fit,' he said, in oriental style, '*to subject to his domination* the colonies of Surinam, Berbice, Demerara, etc.,' he ordered Villeneuve to set sail for Cayenne to take a reinforcement there, to seize at once Surinam and the places mentioned, and this done, to proceed to Martinique to effect his junction there with Missiessy. He was then to sail with all his forces for St. Domingo, disembark there his men and armies, and then return to Ferrol to rally a Spanish squadron in order to enter Rochefort.[1] The honour of co-operating in the

[1] Napoleon to Villeneuve, December 12; to Missiessy, December 23, 1804.

descent upon England had been reserved for the squadron of Brest, commanded by Ganteaume. This admiral was to profit by the confusion into which the English navy would be thrown by the departure of the expeditions from Toulon and Rochefort, to get out of Brest, land twenty thousand men upon Ireland, and return to Boulogne, so as to aid in the great operation of the flotilla.[1] But nothing was more uncertain and more changeable than Napoleon's ideas upon the use of the fleet of Brest. For an instant he thought of sending it to India, *with thirty thousand men*, to wrest this conquest from England, so little had the disasters of St. Domingo cured him.[2] And while his hopes were taking these immense flights, Ganteaume's fleet remained captive in the port of Brest, without being able to move. That of Villeneuve, having got out of Toulon, in some heavy weather which had driven Nelson away, was dispersed with the first gale of wind. The damage caused by the storm, and still more the inexperience of his crews and the bad quality of his materials, sufficed to disable it.[3] He put back into Toulon, towards the end of January 1805, a few days after having left it, while Nelson was gone to wait for him off Malta. Missiessy's squadron alone was able to fulfil its mission, and proceeded to Martinique, where it stayed in vain for Villeneuve.

This accident irritated Bonaparte to the highest degree; but, instead of concluding from it that it was too dangerous to combine such great operations with such bad elements, he immediately adopted the gigantic plan which was the germ of all his subsequent projects. Abandoning the idea of the expedition to India as promptly as he had embraced it, he resolved to send to Martinique, not only Villeneuve and Missiessy, with the fleets of Toulon and Rochefort, but Ganteaume himself with that of Brest. This admiral was to get out of Brest with twenty-one vessels, proceed to Ferrol, rally there the Spanish squadron, and go on at once to Martinique, where he would find the united forces of

[1] Napoleon to Decrès, September 29.
[2] Napoleon to Decrès, January 16, 1805.
[3] *Correspondance de Villeneuve*, quoted by Jurien de la Gravière.

Villeneuve and Missiessy. He would then return to Europe and sail into the Strait of Calais with an irresistible navy of more than forty vessels of the line. The possibility that one of the two admirals might not reach the rendezvous had been foreseen; in that case, Ganteaume would come on with the other, and, if there were less than twenty-five vessels, he would find either at Ferrol or Cherbourg what he needed to complete his fleet, before he appeared before Boulogne.[1] Villeneuve received orders to set out again for Martinique and to wait there for Ganteaume for forty days. This magnificent plan supposed many things that were very difficult to realise. It supposed that our fleets would have no unfortunate encounter; it supposed that they would be able simultaneously to reach the appointed rendezvous; it supposed that when once their concentration was effected, they would be able to maintain it across this immense ocean, notwithstanding the difficulties which the size of the fleet would add to the ordinary perils of so long a voyage; it supposed that the British admiralty and its eminent seamen would neither see nor hear anything of it; in short, it supposed that a navy, incapable of the most elementary manœuvres with ten or fifteen ships, would become irresistible with a mass of vessels such as the world had never seen since the fleet of Xerxes at Salamis. It was on such miracles as these that Napoleon reckoned.

While preparations were being made for the carrying out of these grand combinations, Paris witnessed, with unutterable astonishment, the pompous spectacle which Napoleon considered as the indispensable confirmation of his glory and power. After a great deal of hesitation, caused partly by the well-known indignation that his step inspired in the hearts of all true Catholics, and partly by puerile susceptibilities that seem almost incredible, Pope Pius VII. agreed to set out for Paris. This pontiff, whom neither the snare of Vincennes, nor the remembrance of the anti-religious buffooneries of the campaign of Egypt, nor all the crying iniquities which had been committed either in France or

[1] Napoleon to Ganteaume, March 2, 1805; to Villeneuve the same day.

the rest of Europe, had been able to deter from taking this grave resolution, was seen to draw back at the last moment, because Napoleon's letter did not contain a formula that had been agreed upon, and was brought to him by General Caffarelli, instead of having been handed to him by two bishops![1] He quitted Rome on the 2d of November. Napoleon came as far as Fontainebleau to meet him, but fearing to show too much deference for his guest, he wished their first meeting to appear due to chance alone. It was in a hunting dress, surrounded by his Mamelukes and a pack of fifty hounds, at a cross road in the forest of Fontainebleau, that he presented himself to the Holy Father.[2]

The two sovereigns embraced, and when they entered the carriage together, Napoleon took the right side, which settled the etiquette for the whole time of the Pope's stay in Paris. This was only the beginning of those petty disappointments which, according to Consalvi, filled his soul with bitterness. 'I will say nothing,' he wrote, 'of the humiliations that were heaped upon Pope Pius VII. My memory and my pen refuse alike to dwell upon such narratives.' Napoleon here showed himself to be what he was in everything; always and in everything he required the lion's share; he would suffer no participation; he was ready to regard as rivalry even the honours rendered to a kind of merit that had nothing in common with his own; he would have been jealous of the popularity of a saint, as of the influence of a woman. He never knew that refinement of courtesy, nor even the generosity of heart, which would have made him feel that the weaker his guest was the more easy was it to yield to him the precedence. He treated the Pope as his chaplain.

On the 2d of December 1804 the ceremony to which he attached so much importance, on account of his future and the prestige of his power, took place in Notre Dame. This theatrical representation had been prepared by rehearsals, which the painter Isabey, raised to the office of

[1] *Mémoires* de Consalvi.

[2] *Mémoires* du Duc de Rovigo; De Pradt, *Les quatre Concordats.*

impresario, had very ingeniously arranged for the Court, by means of little wooden dolls, to the great satisfaction of the master.[1] But in spite of all the trouble he had taken, and in spite of the natural facility of courtiers for imitating wooden dolls, a colder or more melancholy ceremony was seldom seen. This extraordinary mixture of obsolete rites and strange customs, borrowed from different epochs which had nothing in common; these garments of composite order, in which we see the Directory coupled with the Middle Ages, Henry IV. with antiquity; these personages embarrassed by their disguise; these generals of the Republic, bearing, one the crown of Charlemagne, another his sceptre, a third the basket of the empress, a fourth her ring laid upon a cushion,—all this, even when afterwards arranged and interpreted by a great artist like David, produces the effect of a monstrous cacophony. All the actors in this grand parody had, moreover, some reason or other for constraint or discontent; some felt that their pride was wounded, others that their taste was offended. The Pope was irritated at having had to wait for the Emperor for more than an hour; the Emperor was provoked with the Pope for having forced him the night before to submit to a religious marriage with Josephine, whom he was thinking of repudiating. It was remarked that he did nothing but yawn throughout the ceremony. Those who did not yawn had, if we may believe the Archbishop of Malines, another kind of anxiety: it was the fear of not being able to preserve their countenances to the end. If a single laugh, wrote this prelate, had given the signal, it would have been all over with the gravity of the august assembly; Charlemagne and his paladins would have dispersed amid shouts of laughter. The secret irony that was mingled with the ceremony in order to turn it into ridicule must especially have struck all minds when they heard this monarch of the Middle Ages raise his voice to swear that he would maintain *equality of rights, civil and political liberty, irrevocability of the sale of national property!* Here the anachronism bordered upon the grotesque. The surprises, too, so

[1] *Mémoires* de M. de Beausset, formerly prefect of the palace.

familiar to Napoleon's genius, were not wanting at the coronation. We know how, when the Pope approached to place the crown upon the imperial brow, Napoleon violently seized it from his hands, and, contrary to all his promises, crowned himself, as if to show that he owed his power to himself alone. This unruly will of a *parvenu*, always anxious to establish his title, could not but deeply wound the Pope, who had come from Rome to Paris to perform a ceremony of which he appeared to be thought no longer worthy. He complained of this alteration of the programme, and gave notice that if the *Moniteur* reported the fact he should be under the necessity of reminding Napoleon that he had broken his word. Hence the silence, so long unexplained, of the official journal on this imposing ceremony,[1] and the incidents which had marked it.

The Pope prolonged his stay in Paris for several months. He had thus time to see how much he had been mistaken when he reckoned on the gratitude of his terrible *protégé*. The service that he had rendered, and of which he greatly exaggerated the importance, had raised his hopes to such a height that he even flattered himself he should obtain from the French Government the complete resignation of Gallican liberties, the restitution to the clergy of the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, and the adoption of Catholicism, no longer as a privileged religion, but as the religion of the State. But the reply to these demands, stated in a series of minutes drawn up by Cardinal Antonelli, quickly dispelled the illusions of the Holy Father. He then lowered his claims, and successively reduced them to the fulfilment of the somewhat vague promises that had been made in order to induce him to undertake the journey to Paris. But if, at that time, they had not thought fit to make any formal engagements with him, they were still less disposed to do so now that they had no longer any need of him. Portalis replied point by point to the minute of the cardinal, in language full of gentleness and unction, a style which he had acquired in attending to ecclesiastical affairs. He lavished on the Court of Rome a great many fine

[1] D'Haussonville.

phrases and empty promises, but this was all she obtained. The only success gained by the Pope at Paris was the re-establishment of the Gregorian Calendar, which took place some months later, and the retractation of the constitutional bishops, which was solely due to the charm and urbanity of his manners.

Though he had failed with his religious claims, Pius VII. did not shrink from putting forward those for the recovery of territory, in which he had still less chance of success. He addressed a memorial to Napoleon,[1] in which, after having stated all the losses that the Holy See had suffered, the insufficiency of its revenues, the spoliations of which it had been a victim under the Directory; 'a government which, thanks to the worth and merit of Napoleon, no longer existed;' he entreated him 'to imitate the spontaneous and celebrated act of Charlemagne, who restored to St. Peter all the domains which Pepin his father had already given, and which the Lombards had invaded, viz. the Exarchate, the Pentapolis, with the addition of other domains, particularly the duchies of Spoleto and Benevento.' This time it was Talleyrand who was charged in the name of Napoleon to refuse the pious petitioner. He did so with infinite gentleness and the most devout assurances. 'It was God himself who had raised the Emperor to the throne, and prescribed to him the limits of his power. The Emperor must respect the limits that God had traced. . . . He could not diminish the territory of a *foreign state*, which, in confiding to him the care of its government, had imposed upon him the duty of protecting it. . . . He hoped, however, to find an opportunity of extending the Holy Father's domain.' In order to judge of the sincerity of the scruples which prevented the Emperor from disposing of Italian territory, the Pope had only to recall the cession of Venice to Austria and that of Tuscany to Spain. In order to build upon the faith which such promises deserved, he had only to remember those which had preceded the Concordat. The past was an earnest of the future. Napoleon was more sincere when he hinted to the Pope an intention, that may

[1] It may be found in Artaud, *Histoire de Pie VII.*

be attributed to him without improbability at that time, and which he carried out much later. This was to offer the Pope either Avignon or a palace in Paris, with great pecuniary advantages, on condition that he would settle in France.[1] The facility with which he had made sport of the Court of Rome was well calculated to raise his hopes beyond all limit; but he forgot that she had only been so complacent through ambition; that she would never pardon him for having deceived her; and that she was about to become as mistrustful as she had hitherto been credulous and docile. He imagined that he had for ever dazzled and fascinated the feeble Pius VII., when he had only wounded him, even in the smallest things. We may read in Consalvi the bitter complaints of these successors of the Apostles about the *paltriness of the Emperor's presents*, intended, he says, 'to prove the unimportance of him to whom they were offered;' and the list of those splendid gifts, which were described in the papers, but which never reached their destination.[2] The Holy Father quitted Paris with a heart full of anguish. Such was the sole result of the journey, which he had undertaken by stifling the silent voice of conscience, and influenced perhaps by a 'religious motive,' as his panegyrists say, but certainly with a view to perfectly worldly interests. He only derived from it an ardent desire to take his revenge; a desire also inspired by a religious motive, but to which political views were again far from foreign.

On the 27th of December 1804 the Emperor opened the Legislative Session with unusual pomp. *The Account of the situation of the Empire* surpassed the exaggerations of the preceding years. Never had our position been finer, more prosperous, or more reassuring. There existed 'no movement that could alarm public tranquillity; no offences which belonged to revolutionary times; everywhere useful enterprises; everywhere an increase in the value of public and private property.' Then followed the picture of the movement that had thrown France into the arms of

[1] Artaud.
[2] *Mémoires* de Consalvi, vol. ii.

Napoleon. France had felt 'that a divided power was without force and without union, and prevented alike both great works and great conceptions. As for him, he had vainly resisted the strength of these principles; . . . he had been obliged to submit to the necessity of circumstances; . . . he had restored to France *those institutions which seemed to be inspired by Providence;* . . . the head of the Church had graciously lent his ministry to the august ceremony. . . . What a theme for future generations, and what cause for the admiration of Europe! Sovereigns, princes, ambassadors, struck with the grand spectacle of France re-seated upon her ancient foundations; and in the midst of this pomp and under the eyes of the Eternal, Napoleon taking an oath to preserve the integrity of the Empire! . . . The oath of Napoleon will for ever be the terror of enemies and the ægis of the French!'

Then came the enumeration of the benefits of the new *régime*, the completion of the codes, the institution of decennial prizes, the encouragement given to commerce and agriculture, the opening of roads and canals,—all this was compared to the 'distant wealth and the precarious resources of the British Government.' There was nothing, not even our navy imprisoned in our ports, which did not furnish this official panorama with a comparison in our favour, for 'the fleets of our enemy were *wasting their strength against the winds and tempests*, while ours were learning, without being disabled, how to struggle against them.' It was certainly quite novel to regard as a cause of superiority the forced inaction of our navy, which had hitherto prevented it from putting to sea. According to this view, what an advantage the long rest of our squadrons would give us over the British fleets! In this simple phrase we find the explanation of all Napoleon's mistakes with regard to our navy.

The *Exposé* contained a picture of the situation of Europe, which was as bold and fanciful as that of our internal prosperity, but which had besides the grave defect of being calculated to wound and alarm the Powers of the Continent. Napoleon assumed the tone of a protector and

giver of advice, much the same as he would have adopted towards the governor of some province of his Empire, distributing praise here and blame there, with the strict impartiality of an arbiter of human destinies. We can understand that this tone was not likely to please sovereigns, already irritated and discontented, who were only waiting for an opportunity of declaring against him. He began by mentioning in ambiguous terms two changes which were not of a nature to reassure them, nor to dispose them in our favour. The opening address had solemnly declared 'that no State should be incorporated in the Empire.' The *Exposé* announced, not less solemnly, 'that the Italian Republic, administered and governed on the same principles as France, demanded *like her a definite organisation.*' It added 'that Holland was groaning under an oligarchical government. . . . She only needed a firm, patriotic, and enlightened government.' For any one who knew how to understand a hint it was easy to see what this meant. These two *independent* states were about to receive in their turn a stroke of the magic wand that had metamorphosed the French Republic into a Monarchy, and it required an extraordinary degree of stupidity not to recognise in this an incorporation. Then followed a glance at the different states and sovereigns, a word characterising the attitude and conduct of each, according to the fashion of a military bulletin. 'The emperor of Austria would employ *the peace* that the loyalty of his character and the interest of his subjects *would counsel him to seek*, in restoring his finances and raising the prosperity of his provinces. The king of Prussia showed himself to be the friend of France. . . . Turkey *was vacillating in her policy; she was following, through fear, a system that her interests disavowed.*' Russia received, under the form of advice, one of the clearest warnings. 'The spirit of Catherine the Great will *watch over* the councils of Alexander. He will remember that the friendship of France is a necessary counterpoise for him in the balance of Europe; *that, situated far from her, he can neither reach her nor disturb her peace.*' . . .

These last words amounted, we see, to a challenge.

Strange and novel way of appeasing anger and making friends!

There is a great deal to take off from this twofold picture of our internal and external situation. As far as the French Empire was concerned, it is impossible to deny that the re-establishment of order and regularity in the administration of our finances, the improvements introduced into the gathering of the taxes and the management of the public revenues, the subsidies levied upon foreigners, the security acquired by the victories of the Consulate, and the confidence that a strong Government inspired in a nation hungering after repose, gave the happy results of material prosperity and national riches. Our commerce and our industry had begun to rise; manufactories were founded, and beside them rose schools of art and trades from which they were to be fed; the roads of the Simplon, of Mont Cenis, of Mont Genèvre, the canals of Saint-Quentin, of Arles, of Aigues-Mortes, those of Belgium, all our means of internal communication by land and by water, had been improved or completed; but the renewal of the war had soon interrupted everything. The immense armaments directed against England, or destined to hold Europe in check, had raised the expenses of the year 1804 above seven hundred millions. It was necessary to think how the increasing needs of the year 1805 could be met with decreasing resources, for the remainder of the sum due to us from America for Louisiana could no longer be reckoned on, nor the Spanish subsidies, which were henceforth converted into the open co-operation of Spain in the war. The re-establishment of the *droits réunis* and the expedient of a loan, disguised under the form of discount on the Treasury bonds by a company of bankers, furnished no effectual remedy. Confidence was shaken, the funds suffered an alarming fall, which Napoleon would have liked to stop by a decree, but his power did not extend so far as that. The bad harvests of the year 1804 necessitated a prohibition of the exportation of wheat;[1] and the more and more absolute interdiction of colonial produce and English merchandise, at a time when

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, Aug. 23.

the supply of foreign products would have been so useful to us, only increased the evil, by allowing it to be seen, by the extension that Napoleon was giving to his prohibitive system in all countries subject to his influence, that the idea of a Continental blockade already existed in his mind. The mischief of such a state of things could not but affect public prosperity in its very sources. It was impossible that the revenues of the Government would not suffer gravely from it sooner or later. It was a poor remedy against such evils to increase the tariff of customs, to put a duty of a million on the proceeds of the *tribunal de Cassation*, to use the singular expression of the Emperor,[1] and to put a tax of three millions upon the administration of justice, at the expense of the suitor, in contempt of the most indispensable guarantees of the accused, who was henceforth obliged to pay for the proofs of his innocence.[2]

If together with this material situation, improved for an instant, but compromised afresh by a bad policy and a bad economical system, we examine the other aspects of our internal position, we perceive that the darkest shades of the picture are just those which express the loftiest needs of a nation. The Government of France was no longer anything but a government of police, very much resembling the autocracy of the czars, with this difference, however, that the caprice of the sovereign was tempered by the influence of the manners, customs, and ideas of a great nation, instead of being restrained by the dreaded revenge of an aristocracy at once servile and vindictive. As for the power of the master, it was the same; he could, when he pleased, get rid of whomsoever he chose, without rendering an account to any one. He was the living law; that is to say, his humour and his temper henceforth made part of the Government. Napoleon's correspondence with Fouché is full of orders of exile, of imprisonment, of confinement within certain limits, for which not only was there no means of making him responsible, but which, for the most part, were only known to those who were struck. The despotism of Napoleon

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, Aug. 30.

[2] *Bulletin des Lois* (law of January 26, 1805).

was, it is true, surrounded by some institutions, the names of which were borrowed from free countries; but they were so organised as to serve only as instruments or masks for his arbitrary rule. France had still a Legislative Body, but it was a Legislative Body whose sessions only lasted a few weeks, whose discussions were not public, whose control, henceforth suppressed over political questions, was only exercised over interests of a secondary order, whose office, in short, consisted only in assuming the odium of voting unpopular taxes, or working out administrative regulations that were submitted to it. France still possessed in name what in constitutional countries is called a ministry; but ministers without opinions, without responsibility, without strength of their own, without influence either personal or collective, are merely higher domestics, and the most submissive of all domestics, because they are nearest to the master.

Napoleon was naturally a very good judge of aptitudes and capacities, provided they did not run counter to his own views and prejudices. What he required first of all in his ministers was a blind belief in his genius. Early accustomed to consider himself as infallible, he was apt to judge merit by the degree of zeal and devotion shown to himself. He was ready to regard objections as a sign of revolt. The manner in which he received those of so competent a man as Decrès gives us an idea of the abnegation it required to be his minister. He exacted an obsequiousness that very soon offended even Talleyrand himself. Is it to a minister and a grand dignitary of the Empire, or to a negligent butler, that the following note is addressed? —'Monsieur Talleyrand, my grand chamberlain, I *send you this letter* to express my *displeasure* at your having allowed the invitations for Wednesday to contain the word *supper*, since the hour for which they are given is *that of my dinner*. I intend that the laws shall be obeyed in *my palace*, as elsewhere.—NAPOLEON.'[1] It was worth while to have been from ambition the protector of General Bonaparte with the Directory to have to bear such insults! What a recompense for a man of such quality!

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, December 11, 1804.

Let us continue the picture. France also possessed a high Chamber, under the name of Senate. The functions of this chamber were magnificent on paper; but, in reality, they consisted in registering decrees that they received ready drawn up; and, compared with their cringing attitude, the opposition of the degraded parliaments of the ancient *régime* would appear a prodigy of heroism. It might be thought that the high salaries given to the senators were not too large for so ignominious an office, that it required as much to induce men to accept it, who for the most part had known and nourished higher ambitions in less disastrous times. Their work, however, was not confined to the sinecure of registering Senatus Consulta, or mystifying the committee of personal liberty. They were expected to render services of a still lower order, in return for the opulent senatorships which had been bestowed upon them. We will here let Napoleon speak for himself; his word is a testimony which it would be difficult to reject. On the 28th of March 1805 he addressed to Maret instructions for the senators. In this kind of *Manual of the perfect Senator*, after having prescribed to these officials of a new kind a residence of *three months* in their respective senatorships, he imposed on them the obligation to furnish him *every week* with a memorial, containing certain information. This information concerned the conduct and character of public functionaries, the influence and principles of ecclesiastics, *the fortune, the character and opinions of conspicuous individuals*, their feelings towards the Government, religion, the conscription, etc. The senators were moreover to observe *if there were any fugitive conscripts*, and what number, examine the service of the gendarmery; lastly, they were to add to this report their remarks upon subjects of general interest, such as commerce, agriculture, etc. 'You must feel,' said the circular, 'that in this private mission secrecy ought to be inviolable. *If it were known, all knowledge would escape you*, HONEST MEN WOULD SHUN ALL COMMUNICATION WITH YOU, and you would only receive denunciations of intrigue and ill-will.'[1]

[1] *Correspondance de Napoléon. Note pour le secrétaire d'Etat*, 28 mars, 1805.

Such was the work assigned to this upper chamber, called the Senate. From the abasement of the men who occupied the highest place in the political and social hierarchy, we may judge of that of the inferiors. If from these institutions, systematically annulled, perverted, or transformed into a police agency, we turn to the spontaneous forces which are the close and still more necessary expression of the moral and intellectual life of a people, such as the press, literature, arts, we see them subordinate to the same idea of cultivation for the benefit of a single person, who absorbed everything; and it gave them a blow that was not less mortal. Bonaparte, who flattered himself that he could extemporise in a few years in the modern world the miracle of Roman rule, so slowly and so laboriously realised in the ancient, imagined that he could revive the marvels of great literary centuries as easily as this phantom of universal empire. Why should not he found a sort of intellectual monarchy, as he had founded a political monarchy? He had only to apply to intellectual things the means which had succeeded so well in the affairs of state; to intimidate some, gain others by the hope of favours which he had at his disposal; draw all around him, and finally make himself the dictator of intellect, as he was that of interests. He was not at that time thinking of erecting principalities in favour of great poets; this inspiration was reserved for his days of exile. As long as he was on the throne he found no better method of encouraging genius than that of offering sums of money. The *Corneille prince* is moreover a contradiction of the same kind as *Washington crowned;* these are formulas for fools, and are not worth discussing. As for the men whom money could not tempt, he had various persecutions to offer them. The problem was by no means complicated for him. A decree was required, and he made a decree. He chose to date it from Aix-la-Chapelle, the guardian town of the memory of Charlemagne.

'Desiring,' he said, 'not only that France should preserve the superiority that she had acquired in science, letters, and arts, *but that the century that is opening may surpass*

those that have preceded it,' he instituted grand prizes, some of 10,000, others of 5000 francs, to be distributed every ten years to the authors of the best works on physical science, mathematics, history, to the author of the best theatrical piece, of the best opera, of the best poem, to the inventor of the best industrial machine, to the best painters and sculptors, etc. In order to carry the enthusiasm and emulation of the competitors to its height, Napoleon added, in his decree, that these prizes would *be distributed by his own hand on the anniversary of the 18th Brumaire*,—an irresistible temptation which made the benevolent intention of this intellectual *coup-d-état* still more conspicuous. By means of this measure, which had not cost either his imagination or his finances much, he flattered himself that he should for ever annex to his empire the free domain of the mind, inspire thoughts, impart ideas, and become a kind of emperor of the intellect.

In order fully to realise this fine dream it was necessary to add to the attraction of prizes of 10,000 francs the stimulant of a salutary fear, and he thought he could not better increase the decennial incentives than with the co-operation of Fouché; the minister of police accordingly became, under Napoleon's direction, the supreme ruler of the intellectual movement. His mission was to apply to the press, literature, and arts, the expeditious processes of his administration. This method, however, of creating masterpieces, by coupling fear with cupidity, did not produce all the results that were expected. The imperial epoch was singularly sterile. There was no intellectual vigour, except among those writers who escaped the ignominy of its rewards, such as Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, and Châteaubriand. Despotism can only produce what it carries in itself, that is to say, uniformity, immobility, and nihilism. The great literary and artistic epochs, which historians have very improperly designated the age of Louis XIV. and the age of Leo X., keep up a confusion of ideas on this point, which it would be well to put an end to.

As regards Italy under Leo X., it is easy to prove that she possessed, besides an almost unlimited intellectual

liberty, a variety of development, a multiplicity of political forms, of which the contrasts, the agitations, and incessant changes have nothing in common with the stagnation of times of servitude. There were a great many local tyrannies, but they were tyrannies which opposed each other, and which left undisturbed a great number of free and independent characters, of brilliant and fearless individualities. The age of Louis XIV. is more calculated to produce illusions. If, however, we examine it attentively, we perceive, in the first place, that all the men who made this reign illustrious were formed under the previous epoch, and brought to it their genius already proved, or their glory acquired. The generation of the second Racine, of Massillon, of the orthodox writers fashioned under the shadow of the bull *Unigenitus*, alone belong to Louis XIV. In the second place, we recognise that during the whole of the first period of this reign literature enjoyed a liberty incomparably greater than that which was left it under Napoleon, making allowance of course for the ideas and prejudices of the two different societies.

The Emperor himself declared, on more than one occasion, that he would never have tolerated the boldness of Molière. This declaration appears very superfluous, when we see to what a mean and vexatious inquisition he subjected such miserable dramas as were written under his reign. History has preserved the record of certain tyrannical *régimes*, which left a liberty to speculation that it stifled everywhere else. There was nothing of the kind under Napoleon. It was necessary to be subservient or to be silent, to think like the Government or not to think at all. The inevitable result of such bondage was the reign of officialism, of rule, of convention, of formality in everything. Poetry was nothing but versification, philosophy became a repertory of empty abstractions or inoffensive subtilties, a simple logical exercise; history was a science ready made, the theatre a school of court flattery, and literature mere witticisms. It was the triumph of sonorous phrases. As in all epochs of compression, a literature exclusively descriptive was seen to rise and flourish, a literature in

which ideas, that are factious things, give place to images and pictures, sentiments to sensations, thought to commonplace.

Delille only just escaped imprisonment for having sung *la Pitié*, in remembrance of the horrors of the Terror; he corrected himself and sang *l'Homme des Champs* or *l'Imagination;* Esménard sang *la Navigation;* Millevoye, *l'Amour Maternel;* Lemercier, the vigorous author of *Pinto*, sang *l'Homme renouvelé;* Chènedollé, the *Génie de l'Homme*—vague and abstract subjects, which could give umbrage to no one. Everything that could relieve the reader from reflecting, feeling, reasoning, was sure to be well received. The virile inspirations of Madame de Staël were suppressed, but the obscure writings of Parny and Pigault Lebrun were encouraged. The theatre, having a more immediate action on the public, was subjected to still stricter laws. Here the question was no longer how to avoid thorny subjects; men had to praise the master or give up the stage. The time was far off when it had been discussed whether or no there were any allusions in Dupaty's *Valets de l'Antichambre.* Duval, who had been threatened in 1802 for allusions which were found in his *Edouard en Ecosse*, was now interdicted for the praise which was not found in his *Guillaume le Conquérant*, a piece written on the descent upon England. The tone had been given for this at the commencement of the Empire, by the inordinate flattery of Carrion de Nisas, in his *Pierre le Grand*, a tragedy kept up for some time in spite of the protestations of the public, who hissed it outrageously.

It was necessary to imitate this miserable model, under pain of being excluded from the theatre; and we find Marie-Joseph Chénier belying his courageous conduct in the Tribunate by the adulation of his *Cyrus*, an act of weakness which caused the remorse of his last years. Chénier, however, raised both his talent and character by evoking the sombre figure of *Tiberius.* This piece was not known till after the poet's death; but it was not the less inspired by the spectacle of the manners and customs which he had under his eyes. Was it of the Senate of Tiberius,

or of that of Bonaparte, that Chénier was thinking when he exclaimed?—

'O lache descendants de Dèce et de Camille!
Enfants de Quintius, postérité d'Emile!
Esclaves accablés du nom de leurs aïeux,
Ils cherchent tous les jours leurs avis dans mes yeux,
Réservant aux proscrits leur vénale insolence,
Flattent par leurs discours, flattent par leur silence,
Et craignant de penser, de parler et d'agir
Me font rougir pour eux, sans même oser rougir!'

Even *les Templiers* of Raynouard, which was performed about this time, had to furnish its contingent of flattering allusions. But as the subject was little adapted to it, on account of the difference of the situation and personages, Napoleon made him understand, through Fouché, that he must in future choose subjects more appropriate to the duty of apology and propaganda, which was reserved for the theatre. 'Why,' he wrote to Fouché, 'do you not persuade M. Raynouard to write a tragedy on the *transition from the first to the second race?* instead of being a tyrant, the successor would be the *saviour of the nation.* Theatrical pieces of this kind are *new*,' he added, in order to stimulate the poet, '*for under the ancient régime they would not have been allowed!*' Raynouard might then at once glorify 'the saviour of the nation,' and set himself up as a revolutionary poet, accumulate the honours of popularity and the profits of favouritism! What could be more seductive than such a perspective?[1]

Napoleon, however, would not have pieces 'of which the subjects were taken from too recent times.' They offered this inconvenience, that they suggested thoughts of things besides himself, of dynasties, for example, not yet extinct; of heroes who had understood duty and politics in a different manner; of habits and customs unlike those that he wished to create. 'I see,' he said, on another occasion, 'that a tragedy of Henry IV. is going to be performed. That epoch is too modern not to revive passions. The stage needs pieces of antiquity.' Antiquity was, in fact, far less com-

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, June 1, 1805.

plicated than the modern world. It only offered simple situations, and the moment the poet was forbidden to brand the tyrant there remained nothing for him to do but to glorify him. Napoleon suspected everything that deviated from this routine, he mistrusted every one; he interfered in the most insignificant details; a ballet seemed to him capable of shaking the columns of social order. He wrote to Cambacérès, begging him to stop Dupont, the dancer, from *making ballets* for the opera. 'It is highly improper,' he said; 'this young man has scarcely been in vogue a year!'[1] What would become of the hierarchy of the Empire if this young man was allowed to tread under foot all the rules of promotion? The master of the world trembled at a song, for tyranny necessarily leads to fear. It was proposed to perform *Don Juan* at the opera. What was the meaning of this? Might not some snare be hidden under the foreign name? He immediately wrote to Fouché, 'that he should like to have his opinion on this piece, *with regard to its effect on the public mind!*'[2] In all this it must be admitted that the terrible and glorious Emperor cuts a very ridiculous figure.

But it is in connection with the periodical press that Napoleon must be studied, if we want to know to what extent such a *régime* is incompatible with all that constitutes the dignity, the honour, the force, and the vitality of a nation. Out of the shipwreck of the press of Paris on the 18th Brumaire, only seven or eight journals survived at the time of the proclamation of the Empire—miserable wrecks, beaten by the wind, worn out, and in constant fear of a total destruction. Driven from politics, or only allowed to enter upon them when it suited the Government to make use of such organs of publicity, receiving from it articles which were to be inserted without examination, not even able to touch upon religious questions, these unfortunate papers only preserved their precarious existence by confining themselves exclusively to science, history, and light literature. They were condemned to live by gossip; as for news, when-

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, April 11, 1805.
[2] Napoleon to Fouché, June 23, 1805.

ever they ventured to add any to what was furnished them by the bulletins of the police, they did so at their own risk and peril; but, however docile and trembling they were in this humble condition, the faint murmur of opinion which they gave was still too much for the ears of a suspicious master; their most innocent productions set him beside himself; and we are led to ask, in reading the grievances he invoked against them, if the press could have satisfied him in any other way than by ceasing to exist. If a journal gave any news copied from a foreign paper, its editors were 'sold to England;' he proceeded against them as traitors to the country and accomplices of the enemy! If the terrified writers took refuge in the past, by publishing, for example, a history of the Saint Bartholomew, like the *Citoyen français*, 'this detestable journal appeared *only to delight in wallowing in blood.* Who is the editor of this paper? With what enjoyment the wretch gloats over the crimes and misfortunes of the nation! I intend to put a stop to this. Change the editor, or suppress the journal.'[1]

In this letter to his minister of police Napoleon adds that under no pretence whatever were the papers to *meddle with religion.*

However, as they had to meddle with something, Fouché had concluded that he could let them proceed in a contrary direction, that is to say, rail against philosophy. But he immediately received an order to impose silence on those journals which 'vomited insult upon all philosophers,' and especially the *Mercury*, 'which was written with more violence and gall than Marat and the other authors of his time displayed in all their writings.'[2] Not only would he not allow them to speak of religion, but he would not even permit 'the name of Jesuits to be mentioned in a paper.'[3] The publicists then confined themselves to events of the day, to descriptions of *fêtes*, flattering themselves that they could recover favour by boasting of the magnificence of the new reign. This is the way in which their advances were met: 'Monsieur Fouché, the

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, August 31, 1804.
[2] Napoleon to Fouché, October 9, 1804. [3] *Ibid.*

newspapers take a pleasure in exaggerating the luxury and expenses of the Court, which leads the public into making ridiculous and foolish calculations. It is not true that the Château de Stupinigi is so magnificent; it is furnished with old furniture . . . get some articles written upon this, . . . make the editors of the *Journal des Débats* and the *Publiciste* understand that the time is not far distant when, perceiving that they are useless, I shall suppress them with all the rest, *and only keep one.*'[1] They will perhaps find favour in his eyes by extolling a hunt? but he immediately discovered the perfidy of this praise. 'They wished to induce a belief in a thing that did not exist . . . this famous hunt consisted of a deer started in a small park, and did not cost a louis. Would not one have thought, from the bombastic account, that dogs had been brought from every corner of Italy and that it had cost half a million?' The *Journal des Débats* announces without comment M. de Merfeld's journey to St. Petersburg. Napoleon immediately points out to his minister the venom contained in this insidious news; 'it was only given to create alarm.' At length the poor journalists, disconcerted and amazed, resolved not to touch upon any serious subject, and only talk of the rain or fine weather; but that did not serve them any better, for it did not hinder bad news from circulating, nor prevent the public from whispering about the threatened coalition. It did not suffice that they were silent; they were required to deceive France by inspiring her with a false security, and, this time, Napoleon went so far as to attack his accomplice Fouché. 'Bestir yourself and try to sustain public opinion! Get some cleverly-written articles printed to contradict the news about the Russians, the interview between the emperor of Russia and the emperor of Austria; and these *ridiculous rumours, phantoms conjured up by the fog and spleen of England* . . . tell the editors that if they continue this tone I shall settle their account . . . tell them that I shall not judge them by the evil things that they have said, *but by the good things that they have not said.* If they represent

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, April 22, 1805.

France as vacillating, or on the point of being attacked, I shall consider them to be neither Frenchmen nor worthy to write under my reign. It is vain for them to say they only give their bulletins; they have been told what these bulletins were, *and since they must give false news, why do they not give it for the advantage of public credit and tranquillity?*'[1]

In spite of their extreme caution and proverbial tact, the eminent editors of the *Journal des Débats* did not succeed in avoiding the rock, and, upon the announcement of the news relative to the duke of Brunswick, they learned one fine morning that they were henceforth to have, in addition to the guardianship of the minister of police, a special inspector for their newspaper, to whom they were to give the annual salary of *twelve thousand francs.* Fouché was to inform the other journals of this salutary measure, by threatening them with a similar fate, and enjoining them to 'put into quarantine *all news that was disadvantageous or disagreeable to France.*'[2] Everything is now arranged for the best, all incautiousness is impossible, errors are prevented. It is the police who hold the pen and guide the hands of the writers. The newspapers are henceforth sheltered from the spirit of faction, and the master will apparently be satisfied. Not at all! 'It can no longer be said,' he wrote to Fouché, 'that the papers are spiteful, *but they are stupid!*'[3] No, indeed, it was not the papers that were stupid! After having done so much to destroy in them all enterprise, independence, reasoning, and even wit, in order to reduce them to machines, he is astonished at the result. He dares to reproach them for the insignificance and nullity which his blows have imposed on them, he attacks them for the consequences of his own system, which was even more foolish than odious. He is surprised not to see them transported with enthusiasm: 'They show no zeal for the Government,' he again wrote to Fouché, in a tone of bitter disappointment, and with the sadness of a

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, April 24, 1805.
[2] Napoleon to Fouché, May 20, 1805.
[3] *Ibid.* June 1, 1805.

benefactor who is paid with ingratitude. Besides, if these papers were not dangerous, their titles were: '*Journal des Débats*, *Lois du pouvoir exécutif*, *Actes du gouvernement*, these are titles which recall the Revolution.'[1] 'Nevertheless,' he added, 'I should like an organisation without censorship, for *I will not be responsible for all they write;*' that is to say, that he would have liked the censorship without the responsibility that it involved. He required a press that was venal and that passed for being independent, journalists capable of guessing his wishes and interpreting his caprices, who would be at the same time patriotic and servile, bold and timid, witty and dull, eloquent and mercenary,—a dream that could only have been inspired by the madness of tyranny. Instead of all this, he created nothing. This was the only account to which he could turn that marvellous instrument which has renewed the world.

It is the less possible to be mistaken with regard to the causes of the intellectual sterility of the imperial epoch, that at the same time a totally different spectacle was presented by Germany, in which country a magnificent movement took place, quite independent of all official influence. The germs of this renaissance existed quite as much among ourselves as among our neighbours, but they were violently stifled by a despotic government, and could not develop till after its fall. All the strength of the nation was absorbed in one career—war, and minds whose activity it could not occupy, or whose ambition it could not satisfy, were reduced to waste their powers in inaction, weariness, and the sterile dreams of *Obermann* or *René*. As for those who were invincibly tormented by the need of independence and intellectual activity, the Empire cast them out of its bosom. Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant sought an air that could be breathed, among the Germans. Châteaubriand began that life of literary knight-errant which only ended with the reign of Napoleon. Exile preserved their genius. All those, on the other hand, who were content to vegetate under the shadow of imperial protection were condemned to an incurable mediocrity. It was an

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, June 1, 1805.

influence that blasted everything it touched, and to which art itself could not submit with impunity, though it has not the same need of independence as other manifestations of human thought. The artists who yielded to it all lost some measure of their strength and originality, beginning with David, the head of the school, so inferior in his official compositions to what he had been during the revolutionary epoch. The master, however, retained an incontestable power, even after this transformation of the friend of Robespierre into an ordinary court painter. But among his pupils there remained nothing but convention, method, monotony, and the dulness of a cold and prim rhetoric. Only two artists are exceptions, and they are just those who protested against the ruling doctrine. Both left the beaten track and followed a solitary path. One was Gros, the painter of the legend of the *Pestiférés de Jaffa*, whose robust genius, amid the parade of the imperial epoch, was still animated by the breath of the heroic wars of the French Revolution, and clothed new exploits with the poetry of an era that no longer existed. The other was Prud'hon, that true son of Greece, the André Chenier of painting, who united Correggian gracefulness with antique simplicity, and discovered, without seeking, the secret that others in vain endeavour to find in a toilsome and thankless imitation.

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